Madurai Kamaraj University

(University with potential for excellence)

Directorate of Distance Education

B.A. English

Third Year Paper - VI

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

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MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY

B.A.Br. XII (C) English Non-Semester Degree Course

(Revised Syllabus)

Paper VI – Indian Writing in English

Poetry : (Detailed):

1. Gitanjali : 11, 16, 20, 35, 53, 60

2. The Best Order: Eds. Nissim Ezekiel / Shakuntala Bhavani / Sharada Bhanu

Selection:

21 Enterprise - Nissim Ezekiel

22. The Fancy Dress Show – Kamala Das

23. Father Returning Home – Dilip Chitre

24. Servants – Gieve Patel

25. Exile – R.Parthasarathy

3. College Poetry : Volume II (ed.) Colin Swatridge Macmillan India Limited

Poem

17. The Garden – Dom Moraes

~~18. Obituary – A.K.Ramanujan~~

Prose :

Recollections of my Early Life – Rabindranath Tagore ed., Adapa Ramakrishna Rao – Rs.27.50 Macmillan India Pvt Ltd.

Except chapters 11, 19 to 23

(Non-Detailed):

Drama : Tughlaq – Girish Karnad – Rs.35/- Oxford University Press

Fiction: Waiting for the Mahatma – R.K.Narayan Rs.34/- Indian Thought Publications, Mysore.

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UNIT I

GITANJALI

- Rabindranath Tagore

1.1 Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore is, beyond doubt, one of the greatest Indian English poets. His fame as a poet in English rests chiefly on *Gitanjali* which as a trans creation won him not only international fame and recognition but also the most coveted Nobel Prize for Literature. The handling of poetic prose by this greatest lyric poet is praised as *impeachable metrical achievement* by Edward Thompson. With an exclusive Indian thought and imagery he faithfully follows the tradition of Indian devotional poetry and passes on a message which is spiritual and universal as well.

1.2 Unit Objectives

To make the students understand

- *Gitanjali* as a prayer song
- Its unique Indian flavour and simplicity of treatment
- Structural organization of the poem

1.3 Unit Structure

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Unit Objectives

1.3 Unit Structure

1.4 Introduction to Indo-Anglian Literature

1.5 Tagore's life

1.6 Introduction to *Gitanjali*

1.7 Critical Analysis of the Prescribed poems

1.8 Summation

1.9 Questions

1.10 Answers to CYP Questions

1.11 For Further Reading

1.4 Introduction to Indo-Anglian Literature

Indo-Anglian literature is the original creative literature by Indian writers. It is not essentially different in kind from Indian literature but a part of it. It commences from the *Vedas* and continues to spread its *Mellor light.* Tagore, Iqbal and Aurobindo Ghosh are the pioneers in this field. The Indo-Anglian poetry can be classified into three phases: *initiative, similarities and experimental.* The poets of 1850-1900, leaning heavily on the Romantics and Victorians, were trying out the new found possibilities of feeling, form and expression. The first half of the last century certainly belonged to the compulsive nationalists, who in their attempt to project tile renascent consciousness of our country, caught in the conflict, turmoil and change which culminated in the attainment of freedom in 1947. For the poets of imitation self expression was important while self - definition and a deep probe into the cultural heritance are the chief concerns of the poets of assimilation.

Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu act as a bridge between these two phases: they are the meeting point of the individual nostalgia of initiatives and the sense of crisis and quest forr identity of the assimilative. The poetry of the post independence era constitutes the experiments. The rapid urbanization and industrialization caused the problem of cultural identity and traditional value added to these were the influences of the west: existentialism, surrealism, New Aesthetics etc.

The modern poets shifted their preference from the Romantics to the moderns like Eliot, Whitman, Yeats, Pound and the like. They derive the modern techniques from such English craftsman like Eliot, Auden, Dylan Thomas and the like. Rejection of all that is traditional naturally leads to quest for newness, stress on individuality and above all originality. While some of the modern Indo-Anglian poets indulge in just image hunting and word hunting there are poets like Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Ramanujan, Parthasarathy and the like who have contributed much to the enrichment of the modern Indo-Anglian poetry.

The term Indo-Anglian should not be confused with the term Anglo-Indian Literature. For the latter refers to the creative writings of Englishmen about India and Indian life. No doubt they interpret India to the west; but their presentation of Indian life is more often romantic than realistic. While Anglo-Indian literature presents India as a land of snake-charmers, jugglers, and Maharajas, Indo-Anglian literature attempts to correct this picture by projecting its trustful image of India. Rudyard Kipling is a typical representative of Anglo-Indian writers. The translated versions of Indian literature in English constitute Indo English literature. In making their literary classes in the Indian languages available to the English reading public in both India and abroad lies the significance of Indo English literature. The translation into English by the author himself fell under the category of transcreation for they are a little less than original creation and a little above translation. Tagore's *Gitanjali* is an outstanding work of such a transaction.

1.5 Tagore's Life (1861-1941)

Tagore was born in Calcutta on 7th May 1861. His grandpa Dwarathanath who led a priestly life was in debts at the time of his death. But his father Maharishi Debandranath settled all the debts and redeemed the ancestral property in Bengal and Orissa. The Tagore family was progressive and enlightened. Their house was the centre of all theological, political, artistic, literary and cultural activities. His elder brother Dwijendranath was a philosopher and another brother Jyotindranath was an amateur artist. Another brother Satyendranath was the first to enter the civil services. Thus Tagore spent his early days, in a house where flowed the surging tides of Indian Renaissance.

Though he was sent to various schools in Calcutta he was largely self-taught. Even his stay in London from 1870 to 1880 for his study was of not much use to him. He received the conventional education and the value of education from the world of nature. His rich and notable experiences widened his mind and sharpened his intellect. The greater influential and inspirational figure in his own house was Kadamban the wife of his brother Jyotindranath. Though she died when the poet was in his early twenties he immortalised her in many of his poems

Check Your Progress Question

1.Who is the typical representative of Indo-Anglian writers?

and stories. In 1990 he founded the open air school in Shantiniketan which later developed into the renewed university of Vishva Bharati. He made many foreign tours to widen the horizon of his knowledge. The countries include China, Germany and Russia. He was conferred the Honorary Doctorate of Literature by the Oxford University. The notable point here is that for the first time the university travelled to the placed of the recipient to honour him with the degree. The great soul breathed its last on 7th August 1941, mourned by millions. He is called the great sentinel for it was "As a Sentinel that he watched, in the age of fading spirituality, over the great ideals of love, joy and freedom".

1.6 Introduction to *Gitanjali*

Gitanjali was first published in English in 1912. He was introduced to the English readers by none other than Yeats, one of the greatest English poets. His introduction to *Gitanjali* is an in-depth analysis of the inner mind and soul of the poet and Indian civilization and culture. 'All the aspirations of mankind' says Yeats 'are in his hymns'. He finds a sense of visible beauty and meaning in these hymns. Tagore has been quite successful in translating all the experiences he had as a boy, all round him in his home literature and music. There is nothing in this poem which sounds strange unnatural or in need of defence. Yeats further praises Tagore for his remarkable success in translating the untranslatable subtlety of rhythm, delicacies of colour and metrical invention that enrich the original in Bengali. It is the Work of Supreme Culture. Tagore, like the Indian civilization itself has been contented to discover the soul and surrender him to its spontaneity. Even nearly after a century of its first publication it still remains a constant source of peace and consolation to millions. Therein lays its success.

Check Your Progress Question

2. Who introduced *Gitanjali* to the English readers?

Gitanjali is mainly devotional poetry faithfully following the age-old Indian tradition. The unique Indian flavour and the new and original treatment make it at once familiar and novel. While popularity of this poem is based on its familiarity in India, it is based on its novelty abroad. The simplicity of treatment accounts for its refreshing and charming quality though theme is mystical and though profound and deep. The simple and economical diction is pregnant with

meaning. The melody has made the poetic prose the noblest of its kind. Though highly revered as a mystic and Saint Tagore he didn't practice or advocate renunciation. Hence his poetry is deeply rooted in life in the most common objects of life and nature.

Even the abstract concepts are vividly explained and illustrated by the constant use of Nature. The common and ordinary yet fresh and original images drawn from nature give perennial delight and novelty to these verses. For example, the comparison of floating clouds with the paper boats by children, description of lighting as flashing sward of the Lord and sparkling stars as the shining anklets around his feet are novel and interesting as well. In the same way simple and ordinary facts of every day life are put to proper use by the poet for the illustration of the various aspects of nature. The likening of rise of dawn in the East to a maiden coming out to collect flowers and the Evening coming out of the west to the maid going out to till her pitcher are two examples of this kind.

The harmony between emotion and idea, between religion and philosophy is, according to Yeats, due to the wedding of poetry to life. Hence Tagore is able to succeed quite easily in bringing his readers into direct contact with the Infinite. The quiet and calm atmosphere, felt throughout the poems, lends a peculiar charm and fascination to this poem. Even the agonized cry for the union with God is so gentle that there is no disturbance to the peace and calm atmosphere of the poem. The repeated expression of the poet's intense yearning *I want thee, only thee* (verse 38) exemplifies this. The appeal of this devotional poem *Gitanjali* (*Song offerings*) is as universal as it was a century back. And that universal appeal and popularity is the chief reason for its being translated into a number of languages.

The structural organization of the poem helps our easy understanding of the poem. The four themes of the poem are the invisible but unbreakable relationship between 1. God and Human Soul 2. God and Nature 3. Nature and the human soul and 4. The individual soul and the whole humanity; they are nearly arranged in *seven groups*. Each group follows the other with a logical and natural sequence of thought.

I (Verses 1-7)	The immeasurable mercy and bounty of God and his boundless gifts to mankind in general and to the poet in particular and the close relationship and love existing between the poet and the creator.
II (Verses 8-13)	The proper and prompt means of realization of God are elaborately and exhaustively described; to find God in the tiller's sweat rather than in temples.
III (Verses 14-36)	Emphasis on the intense yearning of the poet for union with his creator with a detailed description of the pang of separation.
IV (Verses 37-57)	Emphasis on the limitless and intense joy attained though the actual union of the poet with God; there is a sense of perfect freedom.
V (Verses 58-70)	The poet feels doubly happy for the joy of union is not unilateral for God also partakes in his joy. The world that separates the human from the super human is called Maya.
VI (Verses 71-78)	Illusion and truth are the two sides of one and the same coin; union with God is to be attained though the bondage of separateness., total dedication of man to the service and love of God alone will kindle the realization of the unity of self and himself.
VII (Verses.79-103)	Naturally the concluding verses glorify death which paves the way for the long incited union with God by breaking all the barriers and dissolving the veil of Maya.

1.7 Explanation and Critical Analysis of the Prescribed Hymns:

(11, 16, 20, 35, 53 and 60)

Hymn 11 :

This is the most interesting and impressive verse of *Gitanjali.* Here the poet comes heavily upon the priests. He charges them with blindness in searching for the creature merely where he can never be found. He glorifies the sweat of labour which, according to him, is the dwelling place of the Divine. It is the oft quoted verse for its in-depth meaning and profound philosophy.

The hymn begins with a strong advice to the priests to give up chanting of mantras and counting of beads in the worship of the God. *The lovely dark corner of a temple with doves all shut* does not harbour the God that they are worshipping. If the priests open their half-shut eyes they can realize that their God is not before them. God can never be found in the secluded corner of a closed temple for he lives amidst the humble and the downtrodden. He is with the peasant who belongs to the land; He is with the path maker who breaks the stones to lay the road. *He is with them in sun and shower.* Compared to the spotless mantle of the high-priests of religion, their garments are *covered with dust.* But God prefers the torn, tattered and soiled clothes of these labourers to the rich garments of the religious priests. Hence the poet strongly recommends the casting off their *holy mantle. They have to come down on the dusty soil* leaving the holy precincts of the temple, if they genuinely want to find Him.

Then, the poet takes up the question of deliverance. Here again he is strongly opposed to the ascetic view of salvation. He is up against renunciation which the ascetics consider a proper means of salvation. For Tagore it is but an illusion. God himself is bound with in all forever in chains of love. Moreover he himself is not free from bandages. He has voluntarily bandaged himself to the everlasting work of creation. When this creator himself is not free from bondage how can the created hope to attain salvation freeing themselves from bondage. Hence the ascetic concept of deliverance is nothing but an illusion. The proper

and perfect way of attainment of Salvation is the ready acceptance of life and performance of humble duties to the fellow human beings.

The poet then expresses his strong opinion about the offering of incense and flowers in the worship of God. Such an offering, he strongly feels, is of no avail. For, God cannot be seen or felt by these ritualistic super facilities. He is to be found with the humble and the poor who earn their livelihood by their hard work. God really loves the tiller and the path maker not in spite of but because of their *tattered and stained clothes.* Selfless participation in the activities for the welfare of the security of the humanity at large is essential for the realization of the creator.

Thus Tagore proves himself a revolutionary. To think so differently from the accepted views of life a century back is nothing but revolution of thought. Rejection of renunciation, selfless and fireless participation in the work to the upliftment of humanity, replacement of spiritualism with ritualism are the things hitherto unheard of. In his preference to humanistic way of life and worship to ascetic way he laid the foundation for the socio religious reformation.

Hymn 16 :

This is very brief verse but not less signification in meaning and message than any other verse. The poet expresses his loyalty and gratitude to his God for his nonfinite mercy showered upon him and for the endless gifts offered to him. Life on this earth with boundless blessing from the creator who is the most beneficent and merciful is certainly the great festival of the world. There is an innumerable variety of God's gifts in abundance spread all over the world for the benefit of man. The beauties of the world are but the manifestations of the celestial being. The poet feels elated for having been mercifully invited to their world's festival; he expresses his heart felt gratitude for this gracious invitation.

The poet is doubly happy for he is not just a guest for this world's festival but a part of it. He has been assigned a duty. His part at this feast to play upon instrument and sing 'songs in the glorification of his maker. He accepts the work

with the reverence and feels proud in having performed his duty satisfactorily and successfully. But he is not content with that. He is quite anxious to know when he would be blessed with a personal meeting with the creator. He is very much eager to offer his saline salutation at such a face-to-face meeting.

The soul's landing for the re-union with the Divine is beautifully brought out here. The *atma*'s reunion with *Paramatma* is attainable in by through spiritual discipline and self-purification. Having led a life of spiritual discipline and self - purification now the poet yearns for the re-union with the infinite.

Hymn 20

This lyric illustrates, in simple and plain language, the inexplicable mystic truth that God is to be found within not without. People unaware of this basic truth make a hectic search for him everywhere except their hearts which is his true dwelling place. With the use of two images taken from the day-to-day world of Nature, the poet drives home this point.

One day the poet went out in search of flowers. He took an empty basket to collect flowers. There was a lotus in full bloom. But his mind was so preoccupied with worldly thought that he failed to notice the flower nearby which was the sole object of his quest. The lotus, thus, remained unnoticed and his basket still empty. A deep analysis of this line will clearly throw much light on the inner and deeper meaning. The creator is very close to us indeed. His presence within ourselves can easily be felt if we have the concentration of mind. But our mind which is much crowded with worldly thoughts, concerns and worries and miserably fails to feel his presence. God remains unheeded for the lotus in the poem though both are very close to us.

There was a vague sweetness in the air which caused the heart ache in the poet with longing. Like the musk deer he also mistook the fragrance in the air as an external force. He ran after the fragrance which went on eluding him. But the fact he missed to note was that his own inner self is the origin of that sweet smell after which he was running. The futility of search for God outside make the poet

Check Your Progress Question

3. The poet noticed ___ flower in full bloom.

sad and his yearning deep while the God resides within him, within his reach. Those two images of lotus and fragrance in the air from the world nature are, thus duly used by the poet to make his meaning and mind clear.

Lotus - Not an ordinary flower; it symbolizes divinity as the seat of Goddess.

Hymn 35

This is one of the earliest lyrics of Tagore which was later included in *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings). The diction is simple, plain and direct. Yet it still remains a perennial source of inspiration to many freedom fighters, social reformers, and spiritual guides. The effectiveness of this lyric is the chief cause of its unparalleled success and popularity. What the poet earnestly prays for here is not only the social, economical, political freedom of the country but also the spiritual emancipation. True freedom lies not in freeing oneself from the external clutches but in freeing oneself from the cankerous sins which left away his internal self and soul. A totally virtuous living alone lays the strong foundation of liberation in its true sense. The poet therefore, prays to God to bless his people with fearlessness, truthfulness, rational thinking, nobility, magnanimity and aeration to God. Knowledge should be free which should be made available to all irrespective of religion, caste, colour, creed or sea. The narrow national boundaries should be broken to create oneness of the world and to make people citizen of the world. Hypocrisy should be eliminated with the words coming out from the depth of truth. Perfection in thought, word and deed should be attained through ceaseless and tireless striving. Hence, the dead habits of the past should be discarded. So that the clear stream of rational thinking will build a new society; such an ideal world will certainly be the heaven of freedom into which the poet wants the God to take his people.

Hymn 53

The theme of detachment which is essential for the salvation of the soul is stressed here. Also the lyric brings to light the twin duties of God - Creation and

Destruction - as symbolized by the star-studded wristlet and the flaunting sword in the hands of God respectively.

The merciful maker's immeasurable bounty to man is manifested in the beauty of this world. God's colourful and star-studded wristlet is a symbol of this beauty. But God does not adorn himself with his multi-coloured jewel only. He has yet another thing which is more beautiful and more fascinating. It is the divine sword. Curved like a flash of lighting, it clearly resembles the *outspread wings of the divine bird of Vishnu.* In the red light of the sun it glitters with Greater brilliance.

The quiver of this divine sword is the unmistakable echo of the agony of human soul at the verge of death; the glittering brightness of the sword reflects the pure and unalloyed essence of Being-the soul-when it is finally released from the earthly bondage of human body by means of death. Thus this divine sword proves to be terrible too. But in fact this sword is the symbol of strength of spirit. A proper and perfect use of this sword will easily enable man to unite the sins within his in further it helps him in the cultivation of detachment without which the salvation of soul, the sole object of a blended life, would remain unattainable.

That God is both a creator and destroyer is emphasized here. He proves himself to be merciful to man even in death. For, death is not the end of life; it leads to salvation of soul — deliverance — which is the long cherished desire of man while living.

Hymn 60

This hymn glorifies the children for their inborn innocence and enviable simplicity. The repetitions of the words *On the Sea Shore of endless worlds children meet/play/dance* has an effect as strong as the chanting of mantra. The music and melody of this lyric has earned it universal appreciation an admiration.

Check Your Progress Question

4. Who is both the creator and destroyer?

The seashore of endless worlds is the permanent meeting, Place of the small children: spread over their heads is the vast sky without any movement; the

water under their feet is in a sharp contract to the motionless sky; it is stormy and restless_ But the children are not at all disturbed. Neither the motionless sky nor the boisterous water has any power to obstruct their play. The children meet, shout in joy, sing and dance.

The seashore becomes their playground which offers ample space to play different games. With the use of the sand on the seashore they build their little houses; the empty shell is made into musical instruments; the fallen leaves are converted into boats which are floated on the vast deep. As children they are totally free from the worldly worries and cares. They are yet to learn swimming and casting nets. The grown-up cast nets to catch fish; they dive deep into the sea for pearls; merchants soil in their ships to promote their trades. But as the children are free from such labour they enjoy their play. They do not care to pick up visible or invisible treasures. Their world is totally different which is free from greed and grief; it is full of pleasure without pain.

They find mother network as a loving mother. Hence she does not pose any threat to them; even the unpleasant aspects of nature lack the power of freighting these children. The smiles and frowns of the nature are same to the children. They find Mother Nature as a loving mother. Hence she does not pose any threat to them; even the unpleasant aspects of nature lack the power of frightening these children. The smiles and frowns of the Nature are same to the children. They love and enjoy both. The roars of the death dealing waves are as meaningless and sweet as the lullaby of their mother. Unafraid of the deathly waves and the tempest the children continue their games on the shore.

In treating the smiles and frowns of Mother nature equally and in showing fearless courage in nearing the destructive and tempestuous era the child becomes the Father of Man. The man has to learn an important lesson from these children for his salvation. He should learn to welcome the mercy as well as the wrath of God with open hands; he should learn to be resigned to his will; there should be a total and unconditional surrender. Sowing the seed without worrying about the

harvest should be his way of life. In short, there should be detachment but not renunciation in life.

1.8 Summation

Rabindranath Tagore is a phenomenon that seldom occurs in any country. He is an all-round genius. His poetry does not belong to any category of his predecessors, but it is totally Indian with a fine blending of form, matter and feeling. *Gitanjali* could make a profound impression in many nationalities belonging to varied culture and tradition. Rabindranath Tagore, like Chaucer's forerunners, writes music for his words and one understands at every moment that he is so abundant, so spontaneous, so daring in his passion, so full of surprise, because he is doing something which has never seemed strange, unnatural, or in need of defence.

1.9 Questions

1. Consider *Gitanjali* as a prayer song. (Introduction to *Gitanjali*)
2. Attempt a critical appreciation of the verses of *Gitanjali* prescribed for your study (All lyrics)
3. Where, according to Tagore, God is to be found? (Lyric II)
4. What prayer does Tagore make to God after completing his part at the world's festival? (Lyric 16)
5. What does Tagore intend to convey through the images to lotus and vague sweetness? (hymn 20)
6. Describe, after Tagore, heaven of freedom.
7. What do the wristlet and the sword of God signify?
8. How does Tagore glorify children?

1.10 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Rudyard Kipling 2. Yeats 3. Lotus 4. God

1.11 For Further Reading

1) Bose, Buddhadeva, *Tagore-Portrait of a poet.* Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1962.

2) Dull, Indu, tr. *A Tagore Testament.* Bombay, Jaico Publishing House, 1969.

3) Kripalani, Krishna. *Tagore: A Life* Published by the author 1971.

4) Mukherji S.B. *The Poetry of Tagore.* New Delhi: Vikas publishing house Ltd., 1977.

UNIT 2

ENTERPRISE

- NISSIM EZEKIEL

2.1 Introduction

Ezekiel is one of the most popular Indo-Anglian poets. His popularity is spread far and wide. No anthology in Indo-Anglian poetry is complete without a poem by Ezekiel. Inspired by him many have turned to poetry. Thus, besides being a poet himself, he has also been a cause of good poetry in others too. Not only that, he is an impartial and objective critic. His meticulous critical evaluation has brought due fame and recognition to many of his contemporaries. He is the most outstanding poet of post-independence India.

2.2 Unit Objectives

- Form and Value in the poems of Nissim Ezekiel
- Ezekiel's development to that of an existentialist visionary
- The nucleus of Ezekiel's poetic scheme

2.3 Unit Structure

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Unit Objectives
2.3 Unit Structure
2.4 Life and Works
2.5 Critical Analysis
2.6 Summation
2.7 Questions
2.8 Answers to CYP Questions
2.9 For Further Reading

2.4Life and Works

As a Jew Nissim Ezekiel was born in Bombay in 1924. Educated in Bombay and London, he became the professor of English in a college in Bombay but soon moved to the University of Bombay as Reader in American Literature. He has visited many foreign countries on various assignments — as a visiting professor at the University of Leads; on a lecture tour to America, where he recited his own poems in a number of colleges and universities; again to America under the international Visitor's Program; to Australia as a Cultural Award Visitor. Besides being a teacher, he was the director of the Theatre unit, Bombay and editor of literary journals like *The Quest*, *The Indian P.E.N.* and *Poetry in India*. Also he was a member of *Lalit-kala Academy* and *Sahitya Academy*. But whatever be the position he occupied, he never forgot that he was basically and primarily a poet.

Important Poetical Collections

1) A Time to change and other poems (1952)

A remarkable collection for a budding poet in his twenties. As the change of interest from philosophy (which Ezekiel studied) to poetry is on the anvil the title of this collection is quite apt. Poetry for this poet is not just a vocation, but a way of life, a continuous flow, an integral part of life. He says 'Poetry is elusive, to write a poem is comparatively easy' he continues .... the residue

what you read as a poem, the rest,
Flows and is poetry.

Check Your Progress Question

1. The poet moves between two poles. What are they?

Quest for personal identity and deep concern for the people are the two poles between which the poet moves. This collection sums up his poetic theory based on the metaphysics of the 17th century England and Eliot and other modern poets — *All art is based on the conflict and contrast of the opposites.*

2. **Sixty Poems** (1953)

This collection does not keep up the promise that the earlier collection offered. The influence of the metaphysical poets and Yeats is strongly felt here. However, *A poem of Dedication*, the first poem in this collection is brilliant and it clearly declares the poet's poetic manifests. With modest objectives he showed himself not overambitious. No desire to acquire the superhuman powers; no ascetic ideal; no sainthood; no despotic flowers. What he wants is just to be a poet of human relationships so that his poems might be useful to the common reader.

3. **The Third** (1959):

Published after six years of second collection; hence titled *Third.* Besides showing the signs of maturity in itself, the collection also shows sign of promise of further maturity in future. The deep love and sympathy for the lower creatures of nature and the weaker sections of society is revealed in this collection. Though sex is a predominant theme here, it is not the physical aspects or human anatomy that Ezekiel deals with in the sex which is spiritualized and sublimated. Thus this volume contains variety, psychological might widening interest and mastery over languages and versification.

4. **The Unfinished Man** (1960):

From this collection is taken the poem *Enterprise* prescribed for the study. This collection contains just ten poems but this volume found an instantaneous popularity. *The most perfect book of poems written by Indian English... Ezekiel at his most honest and lyrical best.* (Adil Jusswala). Perfect mastery over art, greater metrical skill, music and melody are quite clearly and completely revealed in this volume. Number of poems deal with the theme of urban life and the dark side of Bombay with its ugliness, loneliness and frustration is beautifully pictured. As the poet is the resident of Bombay who has firsthand knowledge of his dwelling Place the rendering is authentic, realistic and intimate.

Check Your Progress Question

2 'Enterprise' poem is taken from the collections of poems entitled ____

5. **The Exact Name** (1965)

This volume has twenty poems, most of which examine the nature and functions of poetry. Hence the title *The Exact Name*. He now seats poetry in the ordinariness of most events and tries to elevate the common place to the poetic and succeeds substantially. This volume highlights the poet's insatiable interests in the lower creatures of nature in general and birds in particular. Also it throws light on his love of simplicity. The theme of sex — particularly sex-relation is continued here. Women may be 'beasts of sex' but they are also myths and dreams. Thus the collection is remarkable in many ways.

6. **Collected Poems** (1966) and **Hymns of Darkness and Poster Prayers** (1976):

The poems written after the publication of *The Exact Name* show a decline in Ezekiel's poetic powers mainly because of his varied interests. His multifarious activities seem to have hampered his poetic activity and talent. The loosening of verse terms also seems to have resulted in the loosening of artistic control and discipline. The subjects are often trivial and the treatment prosaic. Though the verse is a mixture of good and bad it can never be reviewed that Ezekiel is 'A very Indian Poet in Indian English'.

Besides these volumes, Ezekiel has published *Three Plays* which include the dramas *Nalini, Marriage Poem* and *the Sleep walkers*. His literary essays and articles have appeared in various renowned literacy journals in India and abroad.

2.5 Critical Analysis

Enterprise, taken from the *Unfinished Man* (1960) is beyond doubt, one of the finest lyrics of Ezekiel. It is a short poem of six stanzas of five lines each. With a well marked rhyme scheme and mandatory magic all its own, this short poem is a clear proof of near perfection that the poet has achieved in his art. A deeper analysis of things a fine piece of literary composition will throw light on the hidden moral. Thus it is an allegory of the sorrowful human condition. Here this poem is autobiographical.

Check Your Progress Question

3. Ezekiel has written ____ plays?

Enterprise deals with a futile journey of groups of likeminded people. The journey is undertaken with noble aspirations. But in the end there is nothing but failure and frustration. The poet seems to point out that most of the human efforts, however sincere and genuine they be, to achieve something noble are in vain.

> '....... its man's destiny to be for ever evolving, and hence to be unfinished . There is a movement: a growth; something is gained but something is lost also: If her intellect acquires a sharper edge... hope or self-confidence suffers .... and so poems like *Enterprise* become images of frustration.

A group of people decide to go on a pilgrimage. The use of 'we' indicates that the poet is also a member of this group. The destination that this group of city dwellers wants to go is a romantic, precognitive hinterland. All the members of the group are proud of their ideals which are nothing short of noble. To achieve these noble ideals they are brimming with unfailing hope, indefatigable courage and strong determination. Their single-minded, heroic effort would certainly, they are quick confident, produce the desired result. As their minds are totally free from the fear of imminent dangers and difficulties that they may face *en route all burdens* seem to be light. The first phase of the journey is quite convenient and pleasing. It is comparable to Endemic innocence and bliss. Such a state of an unalloyed pleasure and innocence is experienced by a man in his childhood and boyhood days only. For, then alone he is completely unaware of the vicissitudes of life; he has not so far met with any obstacle or obstruction in his path.

But the heavenly bless, felicity that the pilgrims engaged in the beginning is short-lived. In the next phase they encounter unforeseen dangers and unbearable difficulties. Yet, undaunted by the shortening they continue on their journey. In the journey of exploration they have neither the will nor intention to have a self-introspection. They have no mind to find out whether the urge, they had at the start of the journey, is still glowing in them or whether the lure or the remote and the distance has the forces and power to strengthen them to overcome the difficulties on the way. Their idealism remains untested by everyday

experience. They feel their passion is still as hot as the sun. It beat down upon them to match our rage. It seems that the very nature is bent upon foiling human endeavour by setting its objects and forces up against man. Thus, it symbolizes the hostility of nature to idealism and aspiration of man. The hotter the human aspiration the hotter the defiance of nature.

With much endurance to face the challenges they continue the journey without losing hope. They do not just move: they do observe things on the way; they take down notes of what they observe. They note down the sale and purchase of goods by the peasants; they note down the movements and way of the reptiles and lambs. In the course of their journey they cross three cities where they meet a sage who teaches them. But they do not concentrate on his teaching or the message. In due course their noble idealism vapourises into something trivial and common place. This is but natural with man. He miserably lacks the power and force to remain truthful and faithful to his own self for long. The distraction and devastation are too many and too frequently they cross our path. Perseverance and single-minded purpose are essential to overcome them. There must be pain stalling efforts to cultivate these qualities.

The dangers and difficulties that challenge and threaten man from without are not so harmful as the ones from within. Man's inherent insufficiency and inefficiency are more dangerous than the external one. This is made crystal clear by the quarrel of the travellers because of difference of opinion over petty matters. The first difference of opinion is on crossing a piece of wasteland - a desert patch. They could not 'come to an agreement about the best way of doing so. One member of the group who was much proud of his stylish prose was so infuriated that he deserted them. The veil of discord that falls on them now begins to grow and expand. Heated exchanges over trivialities, unnecessary and avoidable quarrels over the petty matters, intolerance of and enmity towards those with a different opinion are the inborn nature of man. That is, the roct cause of man's failures and frustrations is to be found not externally but within man himself. But,

the quarrel and misunderstanding is not stronger, deep-rooted enough to dishearten them. Hence the journey continued without any hindrance.

But beneath the feigned oneness lies the concealed hatred which divides them into various groups, each attracting the other. These petty quarrels have their own impact on these travellers. They are plunged deep into the sea of obligation. The noble aspiration that had motivated the enterprise is now totally forgotten; also forgotten are the noble aim and purpose. Their idealism is blown to the wind. Some of them even think of leaving the group. Failure, frustration and difficulties ultimately succeed in conquering the human spirit. Lack of courage arid determination to face the realities of life drives them to find relief in escape and withdrawal. Some kneel dawn in prayer seeking divine assistance and blessings. The leader of the group, on the verge of vexation, feels that 'he smelt the sea'. According to him they have reached the point of no return and they must return as their pilgrimage has come to an end.

Unmindful of the insignificance into which their once noble pilgrimage has fallen now, they persist. The loss of idealism and heroic aspiration changes their attitude too. Their power of keen observation is gone too. Without noticing anything they move along mechanically. They are crest fallen. Discipline and devotion are no more their hall marks. At the start they were a disciplined group; now they are just the defeated, exhausted and hopeless survivors. That's all physically weak, mentally blatant, intellectually ineffective and spiritually broken, they are dirty and shabby too. That is, their moving thus shattered and tattered is symbolic of the essential truth of man's pilgrimage on this earth.

Their experience is not individual but universal. It is the ultimate and inevitable end of all human enterprises; no human life is an exception to this essential truth. Their petty quarrels, frustration and exhaustion seal their eyes, ear and mind; they are deprived of the sense of hearing. The thunder goes unheard; even if they hear it, it goes unheeded for they tend to ignore its significance. The significant aspect of thunder as a symbol of rejuvenated and regenerated spirit and fertility is completely forgotten and hence they do not care for it. Such a neglect

of so important a matter emphasizes the extreme hopelessness of man at the end of life's journey. The urge and zeal, the driving forces for the attainment of nobler goals are soon lost; disillusionment is so dark and deep that all hopes of inner illumination or spiritual regeneration vanish into thin air.

The disappoint is total; greater the expectation deeper the disappointment. Now the doubt about the very work and significant of their mission begins to shadow their disillusioned mind. They begin to consider both the means and end as meaningless, worthless and futile. Deep sorrow of untold suffering replaces the glow of nobility on their faces. Their career has had the unexpected hums and twists but the end is not worth the candle.

The last line, in a condensed style - a typical quality of Ezekiel - carries the message. Human efforts, however sincere and hard they are, to escape the realities of existence are but in vain. It teaches us to know and accept our limitations and to do our best within them. As true magnanimity lies in never falling but in raining every time we fall, true heroism lies not in the blindness but in the acceptance of our lot.

> 'Home also refers to his city where life has to be lived ... If any grace is to be sought, it can only be within the city's confines, and not outside. Home is the reality principle which must be accepted, faced and made the best of. This is only same and balanced way of life possible for man' (Chetan Karnani).

Check Your Progress Question

4 How many stanzas does 'Enterprise consist of ?

5. The fine fusion of ___ and ___ is remarkable

'Personal theoretic purposes' says the poet himself, form the base of their lyric. A deep analysis and close examination and exploration of his frustrated mind on chasing loss and deprivation are aimed at. He takes to poetic wings with a view to escaping from the personal troubles and tensions. He seems to seek some psychological relief by giving lyrical expression to a sympathetic friend who console and comfort. Though a personal poem it is generalized to make as a symbol or allegory of the pitiable plight of the whole human race. The personal experiences of the poet, thus, become the micro reflection of a macro world. The

poet's own quest for identity, as symbolized by the undertaken journey, represents the quest of the intellectuals and the sensitive like him.

The perfect use of the proper words in the proper order proves, beyond doubt, the enviable mastery of the poet over his art, poetic form and diction. Simplicity, economy and precision of expression with no false note or superfluity makes this lyric enjoyable and immortal as well. The regular rhyme-pattern, the accurate rhythm and the melody add to the charm of the lyric. The fine fusion of the theme and form is quite remarkable. In short, it has all the ingredients to make a poem great which the posterity will not willingly let die.

The poem "Enterprise" is written in a conventional form. It consists of six stanzas, each one having five lines with a rhyme scheme of a b a b a. Ezekiel is a very conscientious poet and chooses his words carefully. He continues to revise and polish them till he reaches perfection. In this poem, the terse, colloquial idiom is epigrammatic, and balance is achieved by verbal antithesis and antithetical juxtaposition. The initial activities of the pilgrims are juxtaposed with those in the final stage, the pilgrims become "a straggling crowd." Their conscientious acts of observation and of taking copious notes become degenerated into numbness in which the tired and dejected pilgrims note nothing as they drag their wooden feet to the destination.

The heat of their enthusiasm cools down in the adverse weather. The exalted minds of the pilgrims are converted to darkened faces. The failure of expedition ultimately brings home a feeling that what they did was "neither great nor rare."

The entire poem is a fine balance of poetic inspiration and poetic technique in the fusion of which Ezekiel is quite adept. This poem confirms what he had written in one of his essays that "in many cases to improve the technique is to improve the poem." "Enterprise" is a poetic declaration of Ezekiel's affirmative attitude of bringing down grandiose visions and to plant them on the dusty soil.

2.6 Summation

The poem 'Enterprise' can be taken as the poet's journey within self. He uses his poems to dive deep into the psyche, into his own psyche. This poem is a veritable study in group psychology, just as the 'pilgrimage' in the poem is a metaphor for the process of self-actualization. Eventually, his "Enterprise" is the magic mirror that reflects the poet's outer and inner selves.

2.7 Question

1. Attempt a critical analysis of *Enterprise.*

2.8 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Quest for personal identity and deep concern for the people

2. Unfinished Man 3. Three plays 4. 6 5. theme and form

2.9 For Further Reading

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UNIT 3

THE FANCY DRESS SHOW

- KAMALA DAS

3.1 Introduction

Kamala. Das is one of the most significant Indo-Anglian poets. Her identity lay in the confessional mode. Her poems functioned as a quest for identity with reference to repressed gender, reticent sexuality and the marginalised self caught in the maze of male monopolistic chauvinism. 'The Fancy Dress Show' is an indictment of the society that is driven by brazenness and hypocrisy. It aimed at demarcating the distinction between the mask and the man.

3.2 Unit Objectives

- Identity crisis in Kamala Das' poems
- Her genius in making her perception frank
- Exposing the society's hypocritical nature

3.3 Unit Structure

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Unit Objectives
3.3 Unit Structure
3.4 Life and Works
3.5 Glossary
3.6 Critical Appreciation
3.7 Summation
3.8 Model Annotations
3.9 Questions
3.10 Answers to CYP Questions
3.11 For Further Reading

3.4 Life and Works

Kamala Das' original name was Madavikutty. She was born in 1934 at Punnuyurkulam in Malabar in Kerala. Poetry ran in her veins as she was born of poet-parents. She is never tired of proudly speaking of her Nair heritage. Though

her parents were poets. Madavikutty did not enjoy any freedom at house; she was treated like any Indian girl child in the India of pre-independence era. She was educated mainly at home. What her parents forgot or failed to give, she received it in abundance from her grandmother. Her grandmother showered a lot of love and affection over her little grand-daughter. She gave back to those what she received from them. She immortalized her granny in poems like *A Hot Noon in Malabar*; *My Grand Mother's House* where there is snooping about her parents in her poetry. As the typical Indian girl — particularly of a village of pre-independent India she was given in a marriage at the tender age of 15. With her three children she is now settled in Bombay. Recently she has embraced Islam and changed her name as Surraya Begum.

Her married life was not as happy as she expected it to be. But the husband was not to blame for his failure. He was quite an understanding and accommodative husband. As a man of modern civilization and a Bombayit he strictly adhered to the principle of equality of sexes. But Kamala Das wanted not freedom but love. She was deprived of parental love in childhood and she felt it now. She was deprived of the love of a husband too. The poignant story of her life, of the psychological transmits she suffered, the felt failure and frustration are narrated in the auto-biography *My Story*.

Almost all her poetry is auto-biographical. Her poems reveal her boundless desire to he loved to madness. Her poetry is unconventional and rather shocking in the Indian context. But the sincerely that underlies her poems can never be doubted. She is always fuel to herself in her writing. Whether it is in Malayalam or English whether it is prose or poetry there is no falsehood or hypocrisy in her writings. Her poetic output in English, like A.K.Ramanujan's is thin. There are just two volumes: *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendents* (1967). The third volume *The Old Playhouse and other Poems* (1973) include, again like Ramanujan's third volume, contains the poems selected from the previous collections. She has published eleven books in Malayalam. Her short stories countermand her personal experiences. The theme of love and the

Check Your Progress Question

1. What is the original name of Kamala Das?

2. ____ is her autobiography.

emotional discontent are dealt with forcefully. Like the Indo Anglian writers she has written poems, essays, short stories in the leading literary journals and magazines. She won the poetry award of the Asian P.E.N. in 1964. She was honoured with the Kerala Sathiya Academy Awavd in 1969 for a collection of short stories in Malayalam.

Kamala Das embraced Islam in 1999 at the age of 65 and assumed the name Kamala Surayya. On 31 May 2009, aged 75, she died at a hospital in Pune. Her body was flown to her home state of Kerala. She was buried at the Palayam Juma Masjid at Thiruvanathapuram with full state honour.

1. **Summer in Calcutta** (1965): It contains fifty poems most of which deal with the theme of love or failure in love. Kamala Das presents a world which is harsh and sun-scorched; which spreads the bad odour of rotten garbage and death; where men have limbs like 'carnivorous plants', where the lanes are 'fevered'. It is a sincere attempt at self-explorational, self-interrogation, self-realization and self-integration.

2. **The Descendents**: (1967): It shows maturity in the art and mind of the poet. As usual these poems also deal with the theme of love. But the tone of death-consciousness in most of these poems brings out the pessimism of the poet. But she is not devoid of courage. 'Her courage to stand against the odds and express herself fully and frankly has deepened her faith in life. What she could not achieve in the first volume she achieves here. In *Summer in Calcutta* she is exclusively personal. She is not able to universalize or generalize her personal pertinences. But in the second volume it is different. Here Kamala Das, the women and Kamala Das the artist become one and the personal experience is universalized.

3. **Old Playhouse and other Poems** (1973): Of the thirty three poems in this collection only thirteen are new and the remaining twenty are taken from the previous collections. We doubt the love theme is still there but with a different treatment. The new dimensions and intensity added go to prove that there is a

further development of artistic maternity. Her consciousness of ageing and decaying of body finds an expression in many of the poems. Here she tries to provide a mythical framework to her quest of love outside marriage. The age-old Hindu myths Radha-Krishna and Mirabhai offer her solace to her love-imaging soul.

Love is Kamala Das central theme and pre-occupation. But love has many facets; the poetess studies it from many angles, and her treatment of the theme is characterized by increasing depth and intensity.

3.5 Glossary

1. Cassock : an ankle-length garment worn in churches by the clergy and the laymen assisting in church prayers.

4. dons : puts on
   mean : In this context, cheap and over simple.

5. Apparel : clothing; attire
   The only ash ... forehead : the holy man, who puts ash on his forehead

6. makes it seem perfectly meaningful, as it indicates his humility.

11. the children of the poor .... A pity; when the poor fast, they merely suffer and gain nothing from it.

14. cadavers : dead bodies, usually intended for dissection.

15. God is in his heaven .... the poet sneers at the faith in God which totally ignores human suffering', compare Browning's poem 'Pippa Passes' :

God is in his Heaven
All's right with the world.

3.6 Critical appreciation of "The Fancy-Dress Show"

In her poem "The Fancy Dress Show" Kamala Das exposes the deceptiveness of appearances. The priest is not virtuous in reality. He wears the cassock to maintain an appearance of virtue. The politician pretends to be saintly. People who go to church to make a confession are not really repentant. They go to church "regularly" to make confessions. This shows that they have not reformed themselves. Their mumbling of confessional statements in the dark is a hollow habit. The so-called patriots undertake long fasts only to deceive people. After the fast is over they gorge themselves with rich food and so survive. But poor children die of starvation and their bodies are left unclaimed in the city morgues, because their parents have not money enough even to arrange a decent burial of the dead bodies.

The poetess is embittered by the universality of deceit and hypocrisy. The Victorian poet Browning was very optimistic. He said in his poem "Pippa Passes" that God is in heaven and he sees to it that everything is right with the world. Kamala Das does not share this naive belief. She says bitterly that the world is stinking with injustice and iniquity and God in heaven is watching all these atrocities. God, it appears, is either powerless or does not want to establish a just order.

In a fancy-dress show children wear disguises only to amuse and entertain others. But in the world at large criminals pretend to be honest in order to cheat others. Their intentions are wicked. In a bitter tone, like Hardy, Kamala Das ended with a conclusion sardonically hints at the rotten love in this nonchalant, stinking world:

> God is in heaven and all
>
> Is right with this stinking world. (15-16)

So Kamala Das frankly and frequently confesses in her poetry. Her confessions are tall, far-reaching and meaningful. Frequently, they do verge on

Check Your Progress Question

3. Kamala Das ends the poem in a bitter tone like ____.

4. At the time of her death, her name was ___.

the point of revolution in the poetic world. In this poem, the poet shows a wide-eyed awareness of the decadent air that our modern metropolitan culture breathes, and the hollow charade that is carried out in which the appearances are given greater status and respect.

3.7 Summation

Responsiveness to social reality got subtly interwoven in the fabric of various central concerns of Kamala Das' poems. In "A Fancy Dress Show" the poet shows a wide-eyed awareness of the decadent air that the modern metropolitan culture breathes, and the hollow charade that is carried out in which the appearances are given greater status and respect. She has a genius for delving into the soul of reality, the very heart of the matter, thus making her perception more frank and merciless.

3.8 Model Annotations

1. *God is in his heaven and all*
Is right with their stinking world

These are the concluding lines of Kamala Das's poem "The Fancy Dress Show".

The poetess is embittered by the universality of deceit and hypocrisy . The Victorian poet Browning was very optimistic. He said in his poem "Pippa Passes" that God is in heaven and he sees to it that everything is right with the world. Kamala Das does not share this naive belief. See says bitterly that the world is stinking with injustice and iniquity and God, in heaven, is watching, all these atrocities. God, it appears, is, either powerless or does not want to establish a just other.

In a fancy-dress show, children wear disguises only to amuse and entertain others. But in the world at large, criminals pretend to be honest in order to cheat others. Their intentions are wicked.

2. *The patriots have survived their*
Long fasts; the children of the poor
Have not been so lucky.......

This passage is taken from Kamala Das's poem "The Fancy Dress Show". In this poem Kamala Das exposes the hypocrisy of the politicians. Politicians go on a fast for some cause. They gorge themselves with delicacies after the fast is over. Poor children are unlucky. They die of starvation.

3.9 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Madavikutty 2. My Story 3. Hardy 4. Kamala Suraiya

3.10 Question

1. How does Kamala Das expose the hypocrisy in the poem "The Fancy Dress Show."?

2. Attempt a critical evaluation of the poem "The Fancy Dress Show."

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UNIT 4

FATHER RETURNING HOME

- DILIP CHITRE

4.1 Introduction

Dilip Purushottam Chitre is one of the foremost Indian writers and critics to emerge in the post Independence India. The anathema of rootlessness put on the poet's father by the banyan tree seems to have come true in 'Father Returning Home', a word portrait of the father drawn in tender colours and with a delicate brush exuding a deep sense of filial attachment for the father. Not only mothers are exhausted from daily struggle, fathers as breadwinners and nurtures of their families are worn out from buys urban work and life as well.

4.2 Unit Objectives

- Modern man's estrangement from the manmade world
- The experience of being delinked

4.3 Unit Structure

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Unit Objectives

4.3 Unit Structure

4.4 Life and Works

4.5 Glossary

4.6 Critical Summary

4.7 Summation

4.8 Model Annotations

4.9 Questions

4.10 Answers to CYP Questions

4.11 Annotations

4.12 For Further Reading

4.4 Life and Works

Born in Baroda, brought up and educated in Bombay. Dilip Chitre is a bi-lingual writer, as creative in Marathi as he is in English. He has lived for four years in Etheopia and later in America. His editor parents were agnostics. He encountered modern poetry when he was ten and started writing at fourteen.

Alienation is the major theme in Chitre's work. As a writer, he is articulate and prolific, but his linguistic power does not protect him from a profound unease owing to the conflict of two vastly different cultures and sensibilities. Mental disorder, death and a troubled sexuality manifest themselves repeatedly in his poetry. Surrealist techniques partially mask the autobiographical nature of his work. *Amkilance Lide* was privately published in 1972, followed by *Travelling in a Cage* (1980). The Bombay poems which form the second half of Chitre's second volume include some of his most successful efforts. Deeply personal moods are given a measure of objectivity and localized through the setting. Recurrent images, complex use of association, juxta-positioning of contrasted idioms all lend a formal control to the work of a highly subjective poet.

This is a poem which conveys a quiet, unemphatic pathos through its detailed observation. The insignificance of the father is rendered through the numerous meticulously observed details, the soggy, mud-stained clothes, the disintegrating, bag, the vacant eyes, the meaningless trivial of his actions. An ageing unimportant and forgettable figure (his descent is compared to a word dropped from a sentence), he is ignored even by his children. The poet presents with irony the father's thoughts, the pompous and abstract topic, "Man's estrangement from a man-made world" contemplated in the toilet of all places. The poem is in its own way, a study of this theme — it explores the state of alienation. The father ignores his surroundings as much as possible. His eyes are "unseeing" and "dimmed by age", "fade rather" than took "homeward". His actions at home are sordid, mechanical and insulated from human contact, wound up with sleep, listening not to words or music but the "static" on the radio. Yet, there is a touch of pathetic grandeurs in his dreams. Unrelated to his sullen

Check Your Progress Question

1. Dilip Chitre was born in ——.

children, he dreams of non-existent ancestors and grandchildren, of moments rich in history and significance lost in the unrecorded past of his nation.

4.5 Glossary

2. Commuters : those who regularly use the public transport system, buses and trains.

Yellow light : dusk, the half-light of the evening.

3. Suburbs : of Bombay

unseeing eyes : this does not mean that the father is blind, but that he has seen the same lights so often that he does not notice them.

4. Soggy : damp with perspiration or with rain.

7. humid : damp, wet, moist.

8. I can see him : imagine him.

16. estrangement: separation, alienation, hostility, indifference.

a man-made world : a world constructed by man.

20. Sullen : sulky, gloomy, resentfully silent.

22. Static : noise or disturbing effect produced on the radio because of atmosphere or electrical disturbances.

24. nomads : wandering farmers or pastoral people entering a subcontinent; the reference is here is to the Aryans entering Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass, several thousands of years ago. The father is thinking of his heroic ancestors who contributed in a positive way to the progress of man. He, on the other hand, contemplates his degradation and the shallowness of his life.

4.6 Critical Summary

In "Father Returning Home", Dilip Chitre writes about an insignificant father's returning home which gives delight neither to himself nor to his children. The father is shown travelling in a late evening train. He remains standing in a crowded compartment. His shirt and pant are 'soggy' and his raincoat is muddy. He is carrying a bag bursting with books. He is evidently a school teacher. He gets down from the train unnoticed. It is like a word dropping off from a lengthy sentence. His house is in a small lane. His chappals are sticky. He hurries onward, even though there is nobody warm towards him at home.

His wife serves him stale chappati which he eats without making any complaint. He reads a book about weighty philosophical matters. In the toilet (of all places) he contemplates man's alienation from an indifferent world by himself. Thus the old father tries to reconcile himself to his miserable lot. His consolation is that most people are leading sordid lives like himself. As he washes himself at the sink, his children watch him without any enthusiasm.

The father is an alien in his own home. He goes to sleep listening to the strange sounds made by the radio which is probably out of order. He is so very tired that he does not want to set right the radio. He experiences splendour at least in his dream which is about his ancestors and grandsons. His Aryan Ancestors made an epoch making entry into Afghanistan through the narrow Khyber Pass. He hopes that his grandsons will make a similar break through. He is sustained by the dream that his successors will achieve what he in his limited sphere as an unadventurous school teacher, failed to achieve.

The experience of being delinked and uprooted from one's kith and kin, one's fellowmen and one's true soil finds a parallel in the father's nomadlike commuting everyday:

> Now I can see him getting off the train
>
> Like a word dropped from a long sentence.

Check Your Progress Question

2. The father is a _____.

3. In all places, he contemplates ____.

Ironically and pathetically enough, one who is so lonely in such a crowded world finds himself in his own best company in the toilet where contemplation or dialogue with the self is somehow possible because even

> His sullen children have often refused to share
>
> Jokes and secrets with him.

Since a dialogue with the present is totally disrupted, the only possible communication is with the past or the future.

> He will now go to sleep
>
> Listening to the static on the radio, dreaming
>
> Of his ancestors and grandchildren, thinking
>
> Of nomads entering a subcontinent through a narrow pass.

The 'narrow pass' is obviously the Khyber Pass through which Aryans came into India about five thousand years ago. However, they were no longer nomads because they and many other later invaders found a safe and rich home in India and so finally they belonged to the land, unlike this modern nomad who is uprooted from Baroda and cannot strike a root in Bombay "where there are no trees." Thus the anathema of the banyan tree has devolved upon the progency who, too, is a nomad of the spirit.

4.7 Summation

Dilip Chitre is a better established and more prolific poet in Marathi. He shows his native allegiance chiefly in his poetry. The anathema of rootlessness put on the poet's father by a banyan tree seems to have come true in "Father Returning Home", a word portrait of the father drawn in tender colours and with a delicate brush exuding a deep sense of filial attachment for the father. Once again an urban experience showing the drab and fatiguing routine of a daily commuter,

the poem essentially tries to bring out the modern man's estrangement from a man made and crowded world.

4.8 Model Annotations

I. ....*dreaming of his ancestors and grand children, thinking of nomads entering a subcontinent through a narrow pass.*

The Father in Chitre's poem "Father Returning Home" is an insignificant creature. He travels home in a crowded train. Nobody at home is warm towards him. His children watch him sullenly. At night he dreams a dream which compensates for his lack of achievement. He dreams of his grandsons making a historic entry into England and establishing a kingdom there, just as the Aryans of the past entered Afghanistan through the narrow Khyber Pass and established an empire there. Father puts up with the sordid reality by dreaming of splendid future.

2. *He goes into the toilet to contemplate Man's estrangement from a man-made world.*

This passage is taken from Dilip Chitre's poem "Father Returning Home". A tired father returns home. He finds that none of the members of his family are warm towards him. His wife serves him stale chappati and his children stare at him sullenly. He feels that he is alienated from those around him. He goes into the toilet and reflects that alienation is the condition of all men. It is a pity that he chooses to think about profound matters in a toilet. This shows the absurdity of modern life.

4.9 Question

1. How does Dilip Chitre expose the theme of rootlessness through his poem "Father Returning Home."

2. Write a critical appreciation of the poem "Father Returning Home."

4.10 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Baroda 2. school teacher 3. man's alienation

4.11 Annotations

1. He will now go to sleep
   Listening to the static on the radio, dreaming
   Of his ancestors and grandchildren, thinking
   Of nomads entering a subcontinent through a narrow pass.

2. Coming out he trembles at the sink,
   The cold water running over his brown hands,
   A few droplets cling to the greying hairs on his wrists.
   His sullen children have often refused to share
   Jokes and secrets with him.

3. His eyes dimmed by age
   fade homeward through the humid monsoon night.
   He hurries across the length of the grey platform,
   Crosses the railway line, enters the lane,
   His chappals are sticky with mud, but he hurries onward.

4.12 For Further Reading

1. Chindhade, Shirish. *Five Indian English Poets: Nissim Ezekiel, A.K.Ramanujan, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, R.Parthasarathy*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2001.

2. Papke, Renate. Poems at the Edge of Differences: Mothering in New English Poetry by Women. Universitiatsverlag Gottingen. 2008.

UNIT 5

SERVANTS

- GIEVE PATEL

5.1 Introduction

Gieve Patel is a Parsi poet writing in English. He is regarded as the poet of the body because human body is a recurrent theme in most of his poems. The body becomes a living metaphor in his poetry. His sympathies are always found with the oppressed and anyone who is denied his basic rights to live. He has a firsthand experience of the pain, disease and death of men and women. The images of death, killing and disease come again and again in his poems. His poetry has the promise and potentiality rather than achievement.

5.2 Unit Objectives

- Miserable state of the servants
- Human situation in the Contemporary India
- Gieve Patel's observance of the poor

5.3 Unit Structure

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Unit Objectives

5.3 Unit Structure

5.4 Life and Works

5.5 Glossary

5.6 Critical Summary

5.6 Summation

5.7 Model Annotations

5.8 Questions

5.9 Answers to CYP Questions

5.10 Annotation Passages

5.11 For Further Reading

5.4 Life and Works

Gieve Patel was born in Bombay. A doctor by profession, he is well-known as a poet, playwright and painter. His play `Mister Behram' was recently staged.

His poem 'On Killing A Tree" is included in many school and college anthologies. Like "Servants", it shows Patel as a realistic and sensitive person aware of the sufferings and hardships around him.

5.5 Glossary

2. truant : one who stays away from a school or other institution without permission.

insufficient plot : because of the smallness of the agricultural land available to them, they escape to the city in search of better prospects

4-5 But the city-blur .... on the skin : references to the light and shadow effects on the skin of the servants.

7. Links body to body: in the 'brown' darkness the individual bodies tend to merge into a single image.

8-9 and the hard fingers / Glow : some of the servants smoke.

12. Other hands : hands of other servants who are not smoking.

15. They sit without thought : a sad image of tired servants at the end of a hard day's work.

17. and the eyes/Globe into the dim : the eyes retain their circular form in the darkness.

19. But are not informed : the servants have never had an opportunity to make a

variety of experiences in their spare time.

21. They sit like animals : the poet compares servants to animals, regrets that he had to make such a comparison, but insists in the conclusion of the poem that these servants have been reduced to the condition of animals.

5.6 Critical Summary

Gieve Patel's 'Servants' deals with the dirty and deplorable condition of the servants of India whose skin is dark and the fingers are hard. Servants migrate to cities from villages in search of better living conditions. They are forced to shift to cities because their small land in their village does not yield much revenue.

"They come of peasant stock,

Truant from an insufficient plot."

The servants live crowded together in cities. They lose their individuality. They are linked 'body to body'. At night, they are exposed to dim, blurred light in which the objects around them appear brown. They smoke and the end of tobacco produces an orange light. They derive relief from the day's drudgery by smoking. They are so tired that they cannot even think about any problem, leave alone engaging in any action, to better their condition. The poet observes,

"They sit without thought

Mouth slightly open, recovering

From the day, and the eyes

Globe into the dim"

Further, the poet says that most of the servants have no practical experience. They serve their duties mechanically. They sit like animals which dumbly remain chewing the cud in their stalls.

Check Your Progress Question

1. Servants migrate from ____ to ____.

2. They get relief by ____.

3. They sit like ____.

"The old flame reflected in their eyes

Large beads that though protruding

Actually rest

Behind the regular grind

Of the jaws."

The poet says that he does not intend to insult the workers by comparing them to animals. Just as the animals cannot fight against their unjust master, the servants also cannot protest against the harshness of their masters. The servants smoke thoughtlessly just as animals chew their food.

Thus Gieve Patel's poems show the pain and agony of the deprived people of that society. He seeds 'life steadily and sees it whole.' He used very common phrases in a very simple language. Though he presents a particular person at a particular place, his individual description is so powerful that the individual description assumes the universal description. He goes beyond the boundary of 'Time' and 'Place' and becomes a universal poet.

5.7 Summation

"Servants" appeared in the New Commonwealth Poets, 1965. It is an impressionistic disposition of itinerant labourers who have made a home in a distant city. Driven by the need to earn a distant living, they live together in a shack, like animals in a shed. Patel the artist can be seen in the graphic picture he presents of the orange spot glowing, as they sit smoking, and in comparing their picture to that of animals, suggestive of cattle, resting after a hard day's labour.

5.8 Model Annotations

1. *....the hard fingers*
Glow as smoke is inhaled.
And the lighted end of tobacco

Becomes an orange spot.

This passage is taken from Gieve Patel's poem "Servants".

Servants lead miserable lives. They smoke much to forget their worries. They sit quietly and smoke. Their fingers are hard because of their heavy work. Their fingers glow in the orange light of the burning cigarette.

2. *They sit like animals*

This passage is taken from Gieve Patel's poem "Servants".

Servants lead miserable lives. They smoke much to forget their worries. Patel compares servants to animals, as both do heavy work without any protest. Another point of comparison between the two is that just as animals chew the cud when they have no work to do so also servants smoke in their leisure.

5.9 Questions

1. How does Gieve Patel describe the lot of servants?

2. Describe the poet's attitude to the servants.

5.10 Answers to CYP Questions

1. villages to cities 2. smoking 3. animals

5.11 Annotation Passages

1. The dark around them

   Is brown, links body to body,

   Or is dispelled, and the hard fingers

   Glow as smoke is inhaled

2. One-way or other –

   They sit without thought

Mouth slightly open, recovering

From the day

3. The oil flame reflected in their eyes

Large beads that though protruding

Actually rest

Behind the regular grind

Of the jaws

5.12 For Further Reading

1. Prasad, Amar Nath. "Critical Response to Indian Poetry in English." New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2008.

King, Bruce Alvin. *Three Indian Poets: Nissim Ezekiel, A K Ramanujan, Dom Moraes*. Madras: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna (ed.). *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1992.

UNIT 6

EXILE

- R.PARTHASARATHY

6.1 Introduction

Rajagopal Parthasarathy is one of the few gifted Indian poets writing in English today. His constant, sincere devotion to the Muse has added new depth and dimension to Indo-English poetry. K.R.S.Iyengar has remarked: "Of the poets who cultivate an extreme austerity in style, R.Parthasarathy is probably the most successful... Parthasarathy's best poems reveal an uncommon talent and a sensibility that deliberately puts shackles on itself." He is a skilled practitioner of an extremely austere style.

6.2 Unit Objectives

- Unpleasantness of life in the city
- Images employed in the poem 'Exile'

6.3 Unit Structure

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Unit Objectives

6.3 Unit Structure

6.4 Life and Works

6.5 Glossary

6.6 Critical Summary

6.7 Model Annotations

6.8 Question

6.9 Answers to CYP Questions

6.10 For Further Reading

6.4 Life and Works

R. Parthasarathy was born in Thirupparaiturai near Tiruchirappalli in 1934, and educated in Bombay. In 1963-64, he specialized in English studies at the University of Leeds on a British council scholarship. For some years he was

Regional Editor at Oxford University Press. His poems have appeared in Indian and Foreign anthologies. In 1966, he was awarded the Ulka Poetry Prize of Poetry India. At present he is a college lecturer in the USA. His mature poems heavily autobiographical, are concerned with the loss of rootedness because of English language education which separated him from his Tamil cultural traditions and poetry. He has returned to the latter for inspiration in seeking fresh stylistic devices towards an Indian English, and for symbols, to express hi identity problem.

"Exile" is a hard-hitting poem from the volume *Rough Passage*. Its images reflect the filth and pollution of an overcrowded Indian city.

6.5 Glossary

Rough Passage : the journey through life which is generally full of difficulties.

Exile : one who lives in an alien land, either from choice or force of circumstances.

1. reels : to lose control of one's movements, to feel unsteady

2. rickety : diseased, shady.

2-3 break/wind, pneumatically: the coarseness of this image highlights the unease and discomfort of the city. Compare the images in 15, 16.

pneumatically : as though full of air.

5. The sun burns to cigarette ash : an image indicative of the filth and pollution of the city.

6. hiccough : inbreathing accompanied by a peculiar sound.

burp : belch; to emit gas from the stomach through the mouth, suddenly and loudly.

Check Your Progress Question

1. Where was R.Parthasarathy born?

2. From which volume, the poem Exile' is taken?

7. Fume	: smoke
10. I am through	: I'm fed up of the city
11. gheltos	: the poorest, most over-crowded parts of a city in which people live, and which as a rule, have the minimum of comfort and privacy.
12. There, language is a noise	:language in which a situation does not express ideas or feelings.
15. combing	: with traffic moving on both sides of it.

16. A cloud unfurls, scarves in the evening : the cloud envelops the evening.

17. I loosen the knot	: feeling suffocated in the cloudy evening atmosphere, the poet seeks escape.
19. The last sun	: setting sun.
hurtling	:the reference is to the brightness of the setting sun.
20. sand turns gold	: the light of the sun makes the sand yellow like gold.
21. squiggle	:twist and turn.
22. masts sniff at the wind...	: when the poet is in a boat trying to escape from the city he feels that he is in a position to forget "the odour of the land".

6.6 Critical Summary

R. Parthsarathy, the poet, describes the overcrowded city of Chennai and his futile effort to escape from it. Some of the images that he uses are coarse and they bring out the unpleasantness of life in the city.

First he draws attention to the dirt and smoke filling up the atmosphere. He compares the polluted city to an obese man whose body is filled with excess of air and who breaks wind frequently. The time is evening. The setting sun is like cigarette ash. Clouds are carrying not moisture that could result in rain but mere fumes. The air, standing still, is like glass and birds fly by pushing- against this glass.

The poet says that he is fed up with the city. The suburbs of the city are like ghettos or slums. The language of the people living here is not musical. It is mere noise. Streets branch off (unwind) like cobras wriggling out of a basket. The image of the cobra underlines the poison — physical and mental — that is generated in the city. A cow stands in the middle of the road dividing the traffi and causing dislocation. The implied point is that in the city there is no healthy pasture for cows. The sky is bare. There is only one cloud enveloping the evening.

The poet feels suffocated. He wants to escape from the city. He walks towards the sea. The rays of the setting sun hurt his eyes. His grey hair gains a golden colour in the light of the setting sun. There are many beats twisting and turning on the sea. Even the masts and the sails of the beats appear to be disgusted with the filthy city. They seem to sniff at the polluted wind, and wipe off the bad odour emitted by the land before starting off.

6.7 Model Annotations

1. *Cautiously in sniff at the wind,*
wipe off the odour
of land with clean sails.

These are the concluding lines of the extract from R. Parthasarathy's poem "Exile".

The poet feels suffocated. He wants to escape from the city. He walks towards the sea. The rays of the setting sun hurt his eyes. His grey hair gains a golden colour in the light of the setting sun. There are many boats twisting and

Check Your Progress Question

3. Which city does he describe in 'Exile'?

4 To escape from the city, he walks towards ___.

turning on the sea. Even the master and the sails of the boats appear to be disgusted with the filthy city. They seem to sniff at the polluted wind, and wipe off the bad odour emitted by the land before starting off.

2. *...streets unwind like cobras from a basket.*

This passage is taken from R. Parthasarathy's poem "Exile".

The poet is disgusted with the polluted atmosphere prevailing in big cities like Chennai.

He finds streets twisting and turning like cobras coming out of a basket. By comparing streets to poisonous snakes, the poet implies that the residents of the city are poisonous like snakes.

6.8 Question

1. Write a critical appreciation of R.Parthasarathy's poem "Exile".

6.9 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Thirupparaiturai 2. The Rough Passage 3. Chennai 4. sea

6.10 For Further Reading

King, Bruce Alvin. *Three Indian Poets: Nissim Ezekiel, A K Ramanujan, Dom Moraes*. Madras: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna (ed.). *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1992.

UNIT 7 A

THE GARDEN

- DOM MORAES

7.1 Introduction

Indian poet Dominic Francis Moraes, popularly known as Dom Moraes, has been influenced by both Eastern and Western cultures since his birth in Bombay in 1938. Moraes has spent most of his adult life in England, and his commitment to the West is now evidenced by his residence there. The Western influence extends to his poetry. Poets such as T.S.Eliot, W.H.Auden, and Stephen Spender are self-acknowledged mentors. W.B.Yeats and even Dylan Thomas also seem to have been of some significance in his development. Eliot's imagery of the modern wasteland and his religious concerns are particularly evident in his earliest volume 'A Beginning' (1957) in which images of resurrection and especially stones predominate. Further, Moraes has sometimes been seen as in part influenced by the British Movement poets, such as Philip Larkin particularly in regard to his wry tone. In addition to this apparent Western Background, Moraes' work has connections and similarities with other Indian poets writing in English, such as P.Lal, Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, and H.D.Katrak to name just a few.

7.2 Unit Objectives

- Dom Moraes as a celebrated poet
- Critical appreciation of the poem 'The Garden'

7.3 Unit Structure

7.1 Introduction
7.2 Unit Objectives
7.3 Unit Structure
7.4 Life and Works
7.5 Critical Summary
7.6 Model Annotations

7.7 Question

7.8 Answers to CYP Questions

7.9 Annotation Passages

7.10 For Further Reading

7.4 Life and Works

Dom Moraes was born in Mumbai, then Bombay, in 1938. His father was the journalist and writer Frank Moraes, who became the first Indian editor of *The Times of India* after independence. His childhood was exceptionally rich in experience, since he followed his father on his journeys through South-east Asia, Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand. That childhood was also shadowed by the dissensions between his parents, and the gradual descent of his mother into a mental illness that would culminate with her confinement to a care institution.

Poetry announced its claim on Dom Moraes very early: his first poems were written at the age of 12, and came in a stream when he went up to Oxford. At home, Nissim Ezekiel gave him bracing advice on tone and direction; in Britain, which would soon become more of a home than India, W.H. Auden offered him praise and Stephen Spender published his poems in Encounter. The Parton Press in London brought out his first book of poems: he was 19, and the book bore the appropriately workmanlike title, *A Beginning*. It won him the Hawthornden Prize for the "best work of the imagination" in 1958, and He remains the first non-British winner of this prestigious award, as well as its youngest recipient.

Dom Moraes became established as a serious poet with his third volume, *John Nobody* (1960) and followed this with a chapbook, *Beldam & Others* (1967). He then passed into a phase of poetic silence, during which he felt the energies of mystery and lyric had deserted him; he could not shape thought and image into verse, although he remained haunted by the memorable characters he had created, the sinister gardener, the innocent prince, the wizard trapped in

Check Your Progress Question

1. At the age of ___, Dom Moraes started writing poetry.

glass, the innocent sinner, the self-mortifying saint. In these years of exile from poetry, he edited magazines in London, Hong Kong and New York, covered the first mass-media trial (that of the Nazi death-camp commandant Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem) and several wars, spending time in Israel and Vietnam and working for the United Nations. During the 1980s, he returned to the city of his birth, and gradually, the poetic impulse returned. Even while he kept up an astonishingly prolific output as a columnist for the daily newspapers, he wrote accomplished poems that were all the sharper for his prolonged dormancy. These have since been brought together in his *Collected Poems* (1987), while his more recent poems have appeared as *Typed with One Finger*.

Dom Moraes never quite overcame his repugnance at the regressive features of Indic culture, the bigotry and violence of the sub-continent's social formation. Towards the end, even as he regarded the rise of majoritarian intolerance with horror and thought the country's future bleak, he achieved a certain compassionate equanimity towards its people, a positive sense of identification with their struggles and aspirations. In a reciprocal gesture, the literary culture that had long rejected him, to the extent of excluding him from anthologies of Indian literature, recognised him with awards, and more importantly, with a revival of serious attention in his writing.

The Long Strider is the title that Dom Moraes and Ms. Srivatsa gave to their book on the 17th-Century English traveller and mystic, Thomas Coryate, who visited the court of the Emperor Jehangir and died in Surat. Considering the distance that he covered, from his early position of self-declared alienation from India, and his intricate negotiations with the conditions of home and elsewhere, self and the other, this would serve as a fitting description of his own life.

Check Your Progress Question

2. Name of the title of the book on 17th century English traveller and mystic?

Dom Moraes was a poet who nurtured his gift despite the workaday demands of prose, who fought his inner demons and gave a candid account of these encounters, and who distilled these struggles into haunting phrases and

compelling images. His candour, just as much as his brilliance, will ensure that he is remembered by generations of readers of poetry.

The celebrated poet, Dom Moraes, who had been suffering from cancer for several years, passed away at his home in Mumbai June 2nd, 2004. Having refused to submit to the rigours of diet and treatment demanded by his affliction, he decided, in the words of Dylan Thomas, a poet with whom he shared a love for the archetypal myth and the richly arcane word, that he would "not go gentle into that good night." Instead, with the sentence of extinction hanging over him, he travelled widely across India, a country that was both intimately familiar and forbiddingly strange to him, and producing several books in collaboration with Sarayu Srivatsa, his companion on these geographical journeys that were also expeditions into a complex self.

Throughout his life, Dom Moraes was alternately attracted and repelled by India, its people, its culture: this tension afforded him one of the most vital impulses of his art, the others being a sense of abiding loss, a search for redemptive love, and a feeling of being permanently in exile, no matter where he went. By a strange paradox, he travelled far more widely in the jungles, deserts and backwoods of India, in the course of his varied career as a journalist, writer of travel prose and director of documentary films, than many of the critics who attacked him for what they saw as his Westernised contempt for Indian customs and his colonial attitude of aloofness from local realities.

Works

- 1958: *A Beginning*, his first book of poems (winner of the Hawthornden Prize)
- 1960: *Poems*, his second book of poems
- 1960: *Gone Away: An Indian Journey*, memoir
- 1965: *John Nobody*, his third book of poems
- 1967: *Beldam & Others*, a pamphlet of verse

Check Your Progress Question

3. Throughout his life, he is attracted by ___

- 1983: *Absences*, book of poems
- 1987: *Collected Poems: 1957-1987* (Penguin)
- 1992: *Out of God's Oven: Travels in a Fractured Land*, co-author Sarayu Srivatsa
- 2003: *The Long Strider*, co-author Sarayu Srivatsa
- *Heiress to Destiny*, biography of Indira Gandhi
- *Never at Home*, memoir
- *My Son's Father*, memoir

7.5 Critical Summary

"The Garden" by Dom Moraes describes the poet's sexual inhibitions. He is in love with a girl seen in a garden. The poet expresses one of the characteristics of love which enters one's mind all on a sudden, and he himself is surprised by the sudden entry of love.

> "I wake and find myself in love:
>
> And this one time I do not doubt."

The poet does not have any doubt about the fact that whether he is in love, but he has the fear of being rejected by the ladylove. So he conceals his love within himself. Many pairs of lovers meeting and nestling in the garden, but he does not have the courage to go up to her and express his love.

The poet's mind is heavy with unexpressed love. As the love cannot be kept unexposed, he does two things to unburden his mind, but neither method helps to win over the girl. In an effeminate manner, he talks to a dove about his love.

The lovers are of two types: innocent and guilty. These two types of lovers meet in the garden without fear. But the poet feels afraid of proposing the ladylove and meeting her in the garden. The poet states that he is afraid of her. Eventhough he is afraid of his ladylove, he is very affectionate towards her. He

says that there is some other obscure reason for his backing out. He says evasively that he has forgotten that reason.

The poet writes poems on his ladylove. He is afraid of going out of home, thinking that all people have read his love poems and might publicly question him about it. He is afraid that the readers of the poems will mock at him or think him immoral.

"And can't go out for fear I meet

My poems dancing down the street

Telling your name to everyone."

As her name will be spoiled if he writes poems expressing his love for her, he is afraid that he will never have the courage to propose marriage to his sweetheart by writing poems.

The poet expresses his love for the ladylove, to a dove like a typical lover. "My conversation bores the dove." shows that even the bird itself is tired of listening about his love for her. The bird clearly understands how much he cares for her ladylove. The poet emphasizes that he will stay in the same place and keep on expressing his love for her to the bird. As he cannot propose the marriage to her, he does not have the hope of marrying her. He will die unmarried. Buried he will marry the dust. The poem ends on a wry note. Even the dove is bored with his talk of love and flies off.

The poet does not feel sorry for dying without marrying his ladylove. The only thing that pains him is that he must address the bird, not to her.

"It grieves me only that I must

Speak not to you, but to a bird."

These last lines of the poem express the hardened heavy heart of the lover who is going to suffer endlessly till his death.

Check Your Progress Question

4. The poet expresses his love for the lady to ______.

7.6 Model Annotations

1. *But I'm afraid of you, my dear*
there was a reason: I forget.

This passage is taken from Dom Moraes poem "The Garden".

In this poem the poet describes an inhibited lover. A lot of lovers meet in the garden and freely express their love. But the lover in this poem is afraid of talking about his love to his beloved. He says that there is some other obscure reason for his backing out. He says evasively that he has forgotten that reason.

2. *Glumly I wait to in dust.*

This passage is taken from Dom Moraes poem "The Garden".

In this poem the poet describes an inhibited man who is afraid of expressing his beloved. He tells a dove that he is in love. The dove is bored and flies away. He expresses his love in his poems. He is afraid that the readers of the poems will mock at him or think him immoral. He is afraid that he will never have the courage to propose marriage to his sweetheart. He will die unmarried. Buried he will marry the dust. The poem ends on a wry note.

7.7 Question

Attempt a critical appreciation of the poem 'The Garden'.

7.8 Answers to CYP Questions

1. 12 2. *The Long Strider* 3. India 4. dove

7.9 Annotation Passages

1. It grieves me only that I must
Speak not to you, but to a bird.

2. My poems dancing down the street

Telling your name to everyone.

3. The innocent and the guilty, met

Here in the garden, feel no fear.

7.10 For Further Reading

King, Bruce Alvin. *Three Indian Poets: Nissim Ezekiel, A K Ramanujan, Dom Moraes*. Madras: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna (ed.). *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Hoskote, Ranjit. *Dom Moraes Dead*. The Hindu, June 03, 2004.

UNIT 7 B

OBITUARY

- A.K.RAMANUJAN

7.1 Introduction

Attipat Krishnaswamy (A.K.) Ramanujan represents the quintessential dilemma faced by an Indian writing poetry in English. His themes are inevitably influenced by the pressing predicament he faces. Alienation is seen as recurring feeling in the welter of Ramanujan's themes. His "Obituary" is a poem on the passing away of his father. He can be seen wedged between the sacraments and commandments of his father on the one hand and his impulses and social veracities on the other.

7.2 Unit Objectives

- A.K.Ramanujan as a poet par-excellence
- As a remarkable and original craftsman
- His mastery of words

7.3 Unit Structure

7.1 Introduction
7.2 Unit Objectives
7.3 Unit Structure
7.4 Life and Works
7.5 Critical Analysis
7.6 Question
7.7 Answers to CYP Questions
7.8 For Further Reading

7.4 Life and Works

Born (1929), bred and educated in Mysore, Ramanujan worked as a teacher of English in various universities in India. Then he moved to University of the Chicago, U.S.A., as a Professor of Dravidian Studies. *The Voluntary exile* proved blessings in disguise in the long run. It enabled him to live in the past as well as the present. *The presence of the past* that he so beautifully presents in his poems is a result of such a living.

Ramanujan's fame rests more upon the transcriptions of Kannada and Tamil literature into English than in his original creation in" English. For his poetic output is far thin; there are just two volumes of poetry: *The Striders* (1996) and *Relations-Poems* (1975) *Select Poems* (1976) an anthology contains a selection of poems from both of these volumes. His Kannada poetry is collected in the volume *No Lotus in the Naval* (1969). His translations include *Fifteen Tamil Poets* (1965), *The Interior Landscape* (1967), *Speaking of Sisea* (1972), *Samskara* (1976). Besides, he has contributed much to the literary journals and magazines. Whether it is the original creation or transcription Ramanujan aims at and ultimately achieves perfection.

1. The Striders (1966): This volume won immediate and wide recognition as a *Poetry Book Society Recommendation.* His images carry within itself the precise figure of the object with a vivid sense of its distinctive quality.

> 'He has an eye for the particular physiognomy of the object and an insight into its characteristic quality. (Parthasarathy). With the debt craftsmanship the poet is able to breathe life into the objects he presents. His poetry is image oriented. The images, according to Srinivasa Iyengar, are unforgettable.'

Check Your Progress Question

1. Ramnujan's fame rests on ___ of Kannada and Tamil Literature.

2. **Relations: Poems** (1972): It is a mature achievement. It is a kind of bridge spanning childhood and age and India and America. The recollected personal emotion underlying most of the poems in this volume proves the veracity of Wordsworth's definition of poetry that it is the *spontaneous overflow of powerful*

feelings recollected in tranquillity. The censoriousness of the tragedy of India, *The ancient chaos of a country* and of being an Indian is clearly presented in some of the poems in this collection. The presence of the poet is the unique feature of these poems. The reason for the thinness of his poetic output, according to Nagarajan is his fastitudeness and his meticulous attention to the aesthetic aspects of his work. He is consummate artist who tries to achieve and achieves perfection before publishing a work. *Obituary*, prescribed for the study is taken from this volume.

7.5 Critical Analysis

This poem is taken from *Relations: Poems* (1971). The account of life, career and achievements of the dead published in news papers is called obituary. Obituary, usually, help those known or unknown to the dead have a glimpse of the facts and figures of life-time achievements. But this poem is the poet's recollection of the past. Long after his father's death the poet remembers his dead father. Ramanujan here speaks about the legacy his father left for the children. The poet seems to mask the seriousness and deeply felt sorrow with a flippest and mock ironic tone.

At the time of his father's death no legacy was left for the children. A table with dust and papers was the only thing he left behind. The dead man left no money: on' the country he died a debtor. There were debts to be repaid by these heirs. An old decaying house and a sickly bed-wetting grandson were also there. These were the things that the poet's father acquired during his life times. Besides these, there were other things which were directly connected with his death. The two -which were used to close the eyes of the dead, the aspects after the cremation and the sunburst but charred spinal discs were the other things left out. The poet wonders how the spiral discs of his father were not burst out though his father was a 'burning type' and had burnt properly at the cremation.

Check Your Progress Question

2. The poem "Obituary" is taken from the volume ____.

Following the instruction of the priest to the author the ashes were piously immersed at the meeting point of three holy rivers near by a railway station.

Except these useless and unusable things there was nothing left behind. The list of things thus left out after the death of his father throw sufficient and clear light on the poor condition in which his father lived. The suffering, consequent upon the poverty, is also emphasized. Beneath the detailed description of the poverty and the suffering lies the love for his father and the deep grief at his parting. In the opinion of the poet his father was just a poor and obscure person who found death as blessing in disguise.

In the same mock-ironic tone, the poet praises his father for having done many things in life. At the same time he is cautious to point out the things his father did in life: they were not actually done by him but just happened to him as a matter of course. For example the birth and the death — the chief events in the life of his father had nothing to do with the skill or ability of his father: his birth through a caesarian operation in a Brahmin-dominated town and the death by heart. Failure in the fruit market was the things beyond his control. Even these two events, even though chief and memorable in anybody's life, are not significant enough for 'any longstanding head shose'.

These events, however important to the person concerned, are not at all a matter of concern to anybody. Even now the only person who still remembered these things is the dead man's son, the poet who loved his father and who is moved to learn by his death. It is his sincere and genuine love for his father that motivated him to recollect and record those events in an immortal poem. The mooting and flippant tone with which the poet tries to hide his feelings is not strong or powerful enough to crown the poet with success.

His concern and solicitude for his dead father prompts him to read the old news paper with the sole objective of finding in them a couple of lines about his father. The information about such a publication in the Madras news paper is passed on to him by his friends. Hence this search, towards the end of the elegy the poet remember to add one more object left out by his father. Its his wife, the poet's mother. But now she is not what the wife when her husband was alive. She is completely changed now. As a widow she is shocked and shattered by the

Check Your Progress Question

3. In ____ tone, the poet praises his father.

excessive grief over the sudden and unforeseen death of her husband. As a member of the tradition-bound and orthodox society his father had left some rites also to be observed annually and unforgetfully. The poet thus, links up the familial with traditional and cultural. The last four cryptic lines reveal a western-trained intellect looking at things oriental with a detached interest.

7.6 Summation

A.K.Ramanujan occupies a prominent place as a poet in the cosmos of Indo-Anglian poetry. He has a mastery of words and in his poems each word is used adroitly, attentively, accurately and economically. He has the cosy craftsmanship to handle English with subtlety, flexibility and polish which makes him at once equal to great English poets. He is careful in using verbs with precision and economy, the structures of which vary subtly to suit the multiplicity of themes. The son expresses his scorn over his ineptitude through pun, implying he did nothing by himself – when he was born, he did not come out by himself, he gave all the trouble and pain to his mother and when he died of heart attack, he troubled others again. At the closing of the poem he shows deep empathy with his mother in the aftermath of the father's death.

7.7 Question

1. Attempt a critical analysis of *Obituary*.

7.7 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Transcriptions 2. Relations: Poems 3. mock-ironic

7.8 For Further Reading

King, Bruce Alvin. *Three Indian Poets: Nissim Ezekiel, A K Ramanujan, Dom Moraes*. Madras: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna (ed.). *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1992.

UNIT 8

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY EARLY LIFE

- RABINDRANATH TAGORE

8.1 Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore's *Reminiscences* was published in 1917. It has been enjoying steady popularity among the lovers of Indian Literature. The book "Recollections of my early life" is an abridgement of the first half of *Reminiscences.* It consists of many interesting episodes from his boyhood days. Tagore gives an account of his early study of Bengali language at home and his subsequent school days. He also describes in detail, the joyous experience of his first outing and his unsuccessful attempt to see a Bengali village.

8.2 Unit Objectives

- 'Recollections' as an autobiography
- value of one's reminiscences

8.3 Unit Structure

8.1 Introduction
8.2 Unit Objectives
8.3 Unit Structure
8.4 Life and Works
8.5 Critical Analysis
8.6 Tagore's 'Recollections' as an autobiography
8.7 Question
8.8 Answers to CYP Questions
8.9 For Further Reading

8.4 Life and Works

Rabindranath Tagore was born in Calcutta, India into a wealthy Brahmin family. After a brief stay in England (1878) to attempt to study law, he returned to

India, and instead pursued a career as a writer, playwright, songwriter, poet, philosopher and educator. During the first 51 years of his life he achieved some success in the Calcutta area of India where he was born and raised with his many stories, songs and plays. His short stories were published monthly in a friend's magazine and he even played the lead role in a few of the public performances of his plays. Otherwise, he was little known outside of the Calcutta area, and not known at all outside of India.

This all suddenly changed in 1912. He then returned to England for the first time since his failed attempt at law school as a teenager. Now a man of 51, his was accompanied by his son. On the way over to England he began translating, for the first time, his latest selections of poems, *Gitanjali*, into English.

Almost all of his work prior to that time had been written in his native tongue of Bengali. He decided to do this just to have something to do, with no expectation at all that his first time translation efforts would be any good. He made the handwritten translations in a little notebook he carried around with him and worked on during the long sea voyage from India. Upon arrival, his son left his father's brief case with this notebook in the London subway. Fortunately, an honest person turned in the briefcase and it was recovered the next day. Tagore's one friend in England, a famous artist he had met in India, Rothenstein, learned of the translation, and asked to see it. Reluctantly, with much persuasion, Tagore let him have the notebook. The painter could not believe his eyes. The poems were incredible. He called his friend, W.B. Yeats, and finally talked Yeats into looking at the hand scrawled notebook.

The rest, as they say, is history. Yeats was enthralled. He later wrote the introduction to *Gitanjali* when it was published in September 1912 in a limited edition by the India Society in London. Thereafter, both the poetry and the man were an instant sensation, first in London literary circles, and soon thereafter in the entire world. His spiritual presence was awesome. His words evoked great beauty. Nobody had ever read anything like it. A glimpse of the mysticism and sentimental beauty of Indian culture were revealed to the West for the first time.

Less than a year later, in 1913, Rabindranath received the Nobel Prize for literature. He was the first non-westerner to be so honored. Overnight he was famous and began world lecture tours promoting inter-cultural harmony and understanding. In 1915 he was knighted by the British King George V. When not traveling he remained at his family home outside of Calcutta, where he remained very active as a literary, spiritual and social-political force.

In 1919, he served as a spiritual and creative beacon to his countrymen, and indeed, the whole world. He used the funds from his writing and lecturing to expand upon the school he had founded in 1901 now known as Visva Bharati . The alternative to the poor system of education imposed by the British, combined the best of traditional Hindu education with Western ideals. Tagore's multi-cultural educational efforts were an inspiration to many, including his friend, Count Hermann Keyserling of Estonia. Count Keyserling founded his own school in 1920 patterned upon Tagore's school, and the ancient universities which existed in Northern India under Buddhist rule over 2,000 years ago under the name School of Wisdom. Rabindranath Tagore led the opening program of the School of Wisdom in 1920, and participated in several of its programs thereafter.

Rabindranath Tagore's creative output tells a lot about this renaissance man. The variety, quality and quantity are unbelievable. As a writer, Tagore primarily worked in Bengali, but after his success with *Gitanjali*, he translated many of his other works into English. He wrote over one thousand poems; eight volumes of short stories; almost two dozen plays and play-lets; eight novels; and many books and essays on philosophy, religion, education and social topics. Aside from words and drama, his other great love was music, Bengali style. He composed more than two thousand songs, both the music and lyrics. Two of them became the national anthems of India and Bangladesh. In 1929 he even began painting. Many of his paintings can be found in museums today, especially in India, where he is considered the greatest literary figure of India of all times.

Tagore was not only a creative genius, he was a great man and friend to many. For instance, he was also a good friend from childhood to the great Indian

Physicist, Bose. He was educated and quite knowledgeable of Western culture, especially Western poetry and Science. This made him a remarkable person, one of the first of our planet to combine East and West, and ancient and modern knowledge. Tagore had a good grasp of modern - post-Newtonian - physics, and was well able to hold his own in a debate with Einstein in 1930 on the newly emerging principles of quantum mechanics and chaos. His meetings and tape recorded conversations with his contemporaries such Albert Einstein and H.G. Wells, stand as cultural landmarks, and show the brilliance of this great man. Although Tagore is a superb representative of his country - India - the man who wrote its national anthem - his life and works go far beyond his country. He is truly a man of the whole Earth, a product of the best of both traditional Indian, and modern Western cultures.

8.5 Critical Analysis

1. The Picture-Chamber

1. How does Tagore bring out the value of one's reminiscences in the essay, "The Picture-Chamber".

Tagore says that the autobiography of a literary artist has certain special features. It is not an exact reproduction of the past. The artist magnifies or belittles past incidents at will. What is important for others may not have any importance for him. What others dismiss as trivial may have a huge significance for him.

Modern psychologists regard the human mind as a vast ice-berg whose tip only is visible outside. Tagore compares the human mind to a big studio or picture-Chamber, the major part of it is in darkness. Only a few pictures in the studio are visible. The door of the picture-chamber usually remains shut. Tagore opened the door and looked into his past when his friends asked him about the incident which shaped him and developed his genius. The discovery that he made when he started exploring his past was that 'Life's memories are not Life's history', especially in the case of an artist. Switching to another analogy, Tagore says that

life is like a journey. We pass by many fascinating scenes, rivers and hills, and finally reach a rest-house. Only while resting does we recollect the many memorable things that we glimpsed in the earlier part of the journey, Tagore is rephrasing here Wordsworth's thesis that poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity.

Tagore says that if one's recollection is strongly felt and beautifully described, it will have a permanent place in literature. Tagore attaches supreme importance to the autobiography of a literary artist.

Annotations:

1. *....Life's memories are not life's history, but the original work of an unseen artist.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay "The Picture-Chamber".

In this introductory essay, Tagore points out that his autobiography is quite different from a history. A historian tries to present the original as it is. He does not modify or magnify the material. But the autobiography of a man who turns out to be an artist later is quite different. He takes liberties with his past. He makes small things appear great and great things appear small. For, he is governed by his personal likes and dislikes.

2. *If pictures which have taken shape in memory can be brought out in words they are worth a place in literature.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay "The Picture-Chamber".

Tagore says that an autobiography, especially that of an artist, is valuable not only for himself but also for the world at large. What an artist has felt strongly and succeeds in vividly communicating has value for others. Not only that, it will become a part of literature.

Tagore is generalizing here. He holds that the genre of autobiography has a permanent appeal not only for its psychological insights but also for its literary attractions.

2.Teaching Begins

What unforgettable experience did Tagore have when teaching began?

In his boyhood Rabindranath was educated alongwith his next elder brother, Saumyendranath, and his nephew, Satya Prasad Ganguli.

Tagore could not forget the nursery rhyme, 'The rain patters, the leaf quivers' taught him by his domestic tutor. Because of its rhyme, Tagore remembered it. He realized that rhyme was indispensable for poetry. The Tagore family had a cashier by name Kailash. He was quite intimate with the members of the family and freely cracked ideas at their expense. He had a lively sense of humour. Tagore observes that Kailash's sense of humour remained intact even after his death. Some people contracted his spirit with the help of a planchette and asked him about life in the next world. Kailash refused to give any information, saying that he had to die to learn it and that others also would have to die to learn it. The doggerel balled that Kailash composed thrilled Tagore because it elaborately described the jewellery of his main bride. The rhyme and rhythm of the ballad also delighted the boy.

Tagore longed to go to school and with his elder brother and nephew. Because Tagore was underaged he could not join them. He cried to go out with him. His home tutor thwacked him and said that Tagore would cry all the more bitterly at a later stage to be let off from school. Tagore says ruefully that Kailash's prediction did come true later. Because Tagore persisted in going to school like the other boys, his parents admitted him in the oriented seminary. Tagore does not remember the barbaric punishment meted out to the weak student who could not reproduce what was taught — he had to stand upon a bench carrying a heavy load of slates.

Tagore's initiation into literature began with his reading of his servant's books such as a Bengali translation of Chanakya s aphorisms and the Ramayana cf Krittivasa. One day the boy Tagore was frightened of policeman and took shelter in the kitchen. His mother gave him a dog-eared copy of the Ramayana to read. The boy was moved to tears by certain episodes in the epic. So his great-aunt took away the book' from him.

Tagore's sentimentality and love of literature are revealed in this essay.

Annotations

1. *'Not a bit of it' was the reply. 'Why should you get so cheap what I had to, learn?'*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Teaching Begins".

In this essay Tagore talks of one Kailash who was the cashier of the family and had a bubbling sense of humour. Tagore says wittily that Kailash continued to crack jokes even after his death. Using a planchette his friends asked him about life in the next world. The spirit of Kailash said humorously that he would not inform cheaply what he learned through dying. The implication is that people could get to know about the next world only after their death.

2. *You're crying to go to school now, you'll have to Cry a lot more to be let of later on?*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Teaching Begins".

Tagore's next elder brother and cousin were allowed to go to school but no Tagore, as he was under aged.

The boy Tagore could not bear this discrimination. He cried bitterly. His home tutor warned him that school life was not a bed of roses. Once he joined school life he would grow to hate it and cry to get out of it.

What the home tutor said did come true. Tagore did not like the restrictive school life. He longed for the freedom outside school later.

3. Within and Without

1. How does Tagore describe life within and outside his home during his childhood?

In the essay, "Within and Without", Tagore describes the restricted life he lived as a boy.

First, Tagore recalls that children did not enjoy luxuries in the past and delicacies were unheard of. Their clothings were cheap and sparse. In winter a boy wore two cotton tunics and not any costly woollen dress to protect himself from cold. The boy's shirt had a pocket without much money in it. Even trivial things were rarities to children. The children derived the utmost pleasure from their few possessions. Tagore observes that the modern child coming from an affluent family has a lot of playthings but its mind is jaded. So it gets little pleasure out of its toys.

Second, Tagore observes that children were subjected to many restrictions in the past. Tagore longed to leave home and wander at will. But a servant called Shyam drew a circle round the boy Tagore and told him that he must not step out of it. Poor Tagore would peer through venetian shutters to have a look at the bathers in the nearby tank. He was fascinated by their different ways of dipping, some bathed hastily merely squeezing their wet towels on their heads. Some muttered their morning, prayers while bathing. Some bathed in a leisure manner, rubbing themselves several time. They removed their wet clothes and wore dry ones, taking care to arrange the folds of their waist-cloth. They gathered flowers in the nearby garden and walked back home slowly, radiating freshness. After all the bathers left, Tagore would spend his time watching ducks paddling about. Even after he was grown up, Tagore felt himself restricted, as though there was a ring round him, containing his movement. He always felt like a caged bird.

Sometimes he would steal into his father's room and lie motionless on his sofa. Sitting under the newly fixed shower tap, he got immense pleasure when water poured and splashed on him. He was doubly thrilled because it was a

stealthy act. Another act that excited him was watching a custard apple seed sprout. The same sight did not give him any pleasure when he was grown up. During his childhood, all sights and sounds pleased him. It was as if the outside world kept something mysterious and beckoned him to find it out.

Annotations:

1. *What little we did get we enjoyed to the utmost, from skin to core nothing was thrown away.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Within and Without".

In this passage Tagore contrasts the habits of a modern child with those of a child in Tagore's time. In Tagore's time children did not have any luxuries. They did not have delicacies or rich clothes. They did not have toys. As a result, they derived immense pleasure from the few things they possessed. Life was like a ripe fruit to them. They are not only the fleshy part of the fruit but also its skin and seed. But the modern child coming from a well-to-do family has a plethora of luxuries. So, it becomes fed up with the toys and delicacies made available to it. It merely nibbles at a fruit and throws away the major part of it.

2. *I had read in the Ramayana of the tribulations of Situ for having left the ring drawn by Lakshman, so it was not possible for me to be sceptical of its potency.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Within and Without".

In this essay Tagore talks of the restrictions that were imposed on him during his boyhood. A servant by name Shyam used to draw a ring round Tagore and forbid him to step out of it. Tagore did not have the courage to step out of the rings. He was remained of the risk that Sita ran by over-stepping the line drawn by Lakshman in the *Ramayana*. Tagore was afraid that similar dangers would arise if he disobeyed Shyam.

3. *Earth, water, foliage and sky, they all spoke to us and would not be disregarded.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Within and Without".

Tagore says that he was thrilled by natural scenes when he was a boy. Earth, water, foliage and sky were like human being. They spoke to the boy Tagore and were appreciated by him. But now they are mere inanimate objects. The grown-up Tagore has lost his fine sensitivity. Nature no longer appeals to him.

4. Servocracy

What is Tagore's impression of servants tyrannizing over children?

The children of the Tagore household were entrusted to unimaginative and tyrannical servants. Tagore compares these servants to the despotic rulers of the slave Dynasty who did not achieve anything glorious but were a terror to their subjects. Tagore could not understand why the servants were so very cruel. There was nothing wrong in the children's behaviour. They did not at all deserve the brutal punishment meted out to them. The servants' brutality was probably due to the fact that they were overburdened with work. Tagore observes that if children are left free to run and play about and satisfy their curiosity they will not give any trouble to servants.

Tagore particularly disliked a servant by name Iswar. He had been a village school master before becoming a servant. He fussed a great deal about impurity. He thrust away the surface impurities of the tank before clipping into water. He always plunged his water pot into the depth of the tank, hoping to draw uncontaminated water from there. When he walked his hands did not touch his garments. Probably he feared that his dress would dirty his hands. He used a highly artificial diction which was often ridiculed by the members of the Tagore household.

Iswar compelled the children to listen to narration of stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. His purpose was not to teach them ethical values but to keep them quiet in the evenings. Once he was narrating at very great

length the story of Lava and how they humbled their renowned father Rama. The children were bored but Iswar did not care for their restlessness. At last Tagore's father's old friend Kishori came there and finished the story quickly by using Dasuraya's jingling verse.

Iswar pretended to be a great scholar. He discussed ancient shastras and made seemingly wise pronouncements. Though an ordinary servant he spoke assertively about shastric matters like old Grandfather Bhishma in the Mahabharata. This 'reverend servitor' had one serious - he took opium. He had a craving for rich food, yet, he did not compel the boys to eat their morning goblets of milk. He underestimated the boys' capacity for solid nourishment. In the evening he dropped on the plate of each boy a small quantity of luchis. Invariably, the boys asked for more, Iswar fed the boys on the edibles they preferred such as puffed rice, boiled gram and roasted groundnuts. In the matter of feeding the students, Iswar was quite generous.

Annotation:

...as with old Grandfather Bhishma in the Mahabharata, his supremacy would assert itself from his seat below his juniors.

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Servocracy" in which he attacks the cruel servants of his household.

There was a servant by name Iswar who gave himself airs. He always made scholarly pronouncements on ancient shastras. Though an ordinary servant, he talked like the sage Bhishma of the *Mahabharata.* His assumptions irritated Tagore.

5. The Normal School

What were Tagore s experiences at the Normal School?

Before going to the Normal School, Tagore studied at the oriented seminary. He emulated the brutality of his teachers by treating the wooden bars in

the verandah of his house as his students and caning them hard. He did not have the power to ill-treat living human beings.

At the Normal School, teachers compelled the students to begin their daily routine by singing an English devotional song. This step was calculated to cheer up the students. But in reality the students were not interested in singing this song. They mumbled and distorted the words out of recognition. For example, they sang. `Kallokee Pullokee'. Tullokee, may be a transformation of 'Full of glee'. But Tagore would not trace the origin of the word `Kallokee'. The teachers did not realize that the students neither understood nor relished singing this song.

Tagore did not like his fellow students. For, their habits and manners were revolting. During intervals, Tagore went upstairs and thought sadly of the many dull years that he would have to spend at the Normal School. There was a teacher whose language was very foul. Tagore hated him so much that he refused to answer his questions. When the other students were busy droning their lessons: Tagore spent his time imagining how to defeat an enemy without using arms. He thought ferocious dogs and tigers could be trained to frighten away enemies. It took Tagore a long time to realize that there is no short-cut to victory and that a difficult /problem cannot be solved easily.

At the end of the first year at the Normal School, Tagore was examined in Bengali. He was adjusted first. But the authorities thought that there was favouritism at work. So he was examined a second time. With the superintendent of the school himself acting as an invigilator. Tagore stood first in the second test also. His genius was proved beyond doubt.

6. Versification

How does Tagore describe his first efforts at "Versification"?

When Tagore was eight years old, a relation of his asked him to write a poem. He also taught him the prayer metre of fourteen syllables. Tagore was not inclined to make any effort in this direction for fear of damaging the English

language. Just as he took pity on a thief who was caught and beaten up by people, he took pity on the English language which he feared was going to be mishandled by him.

Tagore took hold of a note-book of thin blue paper and drew pencil lines with his own hands. He poured all his early verses in this note-book. Like a young deer which butts here and there with its newly sprouting horns, he was making himself a nuisance with his budding poetry. His brother went about boasting that Tagore was an accomplished poet. Once he compelled Nabagopal Mitter, editor of the *National Paper*, to listen to Tagore's recitation of one of his poems. Tagore was thrilled to have such an elite audience. He recited his poem 'The Lotus' and was applauded by Mitter. But he was quite at a loss to explain what the word dwirepha meant. Tagore had used the word without knowing, that it meant a kind of honey bee. He thought that Mitter was lacking in understanding and took delight in exposing him. Tagore decided not to read out any more poems to him. This episode shows that Tagore was too sensitive to face criticism.

Annotations :

1. *Thieves have scarcely suffered too much, and from so many.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Versification".

Tagore's brother asked him to write poems. Tagore was unwilling in the beginning. He was afraid that he would be only damaging English with his bad poems. Tagore had once seen a thief being caught and beaten up by people. He thought that like the thief, English was being roughly treated by many poetasters.

Tagore's humility is revealed here. He is not proud of his stature as a poet.

2. *Like a young deer which butts here, there and everywhere with its newly sprouting horns, made myself a nuisance with my budding poetry.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Versification" in which he describes his early attempts at composing poems.

Encouraged by his brother, Tagore started writing poems in a ruled note-book. What was more, he recited his poems to whoever was prepared to listen. In this context Tagore compares himself to a young deer. Just as the deer butts objects with its newly sprouting horns, so the young Tagore troubled people with his poetry.

3. *However Nabagopal Babu might smile, the word dwirepha like a bee drunk with honey, stuck to its place unmoved.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "Versilication" in which he describes his early attempts at composing English poems.

Once he read out his poem, 'The Lotus' to one Nabagopal, editor of the *National Paper*. Nabagopal appreciated the poem but did not understand the meaning of the word dwirepha which Tagore had used. Tagore also did not know what the word meant. But he did not want to replace the word. The word remained stuck, just as a honeybee remains stuck in a flower.

'Dwirepha' means a honeybee. The meaning is hinted at indirectly in the passage.

7. Various Learning

What was Tagore's reaction to the 'Various Learning' to which he was subjected at. home?

It was thought that the education imparted to Tagore at the Normal School was not sufficient. So a variety of subjects were taught to him he tore and after school hours. The boy had to get up before dawn and practise wrestling. Then he was taught literature, mathematics, geography and history. On return from school, he had to sit at the feet of the drawing and gymnastic masters. In the evening one Aghore Babu taught English lessons. Tagore was left free only after time.

On Sundays also Tagore was ground out: one Sitanath Dutta gave him demonstrations in particularly the one which showed how water boiled. He was

also thrilled to learn that water is a separable part of milk and that milk thickens when boiled only because the water in it turns to vapour. A pupil of the Campbell Medical School brought a skeleton with bones tied up by wires and taught Tagore the structure of the human anatomy. Next came the dry-as-dust Tawaratna who taught the boy the subtleties of Sanskrit grammar.

Tagore remembers the English tutor Aghore Babu in particular, as he was a stickier for discipline. He was not only Tagore's English tutor but was also attending the Medical College. He never absented himself from work. Even when he was laid up with a broken head, he engaged Tagore. One evening, it was raining heavily. Tagore and his mates hoped that Aghore would not come. But, to their great horror, Aghore did come, holding an umbrella over his head. Coming, at the end of a day of tiring work, Aghore was disliked by all the students. To enliven his English lessons, Aghore sometimes told them about the marvels of medical science. Once he brought from the Medical College, a portion of the human vocal organs and explained how sounds are made. Tagore was surprised because he had been under the impression that the whole body and not just the vocal organ was involved in the production of sounds.

On another occasion Tagore was taken by Aghore to the dissecting room of the medical college where he was revolted by the sight of an amputated leg lying on the floor. To view the human body in fragments was horrifying to Tagore. Aghore led Tagore from Peary Sarkar's first and second English readers to Mcculloch's course of Reading. Mcculloch's reader did not contain any illustrations. Each lesson in this book started with a list of words with accent marks which appeared like formidable bayonets to Tagore. No sooner did Aghore start teaching English than Tagore's head began to nod. Sometimes his elder brother appeared on the scene and took the drowsy boy away.

8. My First Outing

How does Tagore rapturously describe his first outing?

To escape from the raging dengue fever the Tagore family took shelter in a secluded villa on the bank of the Ganges. Tagore was thrilled to see the ebb and flow of the Ganges. There was a thick grove of guava trees nearby, casting dark shadows on the river. Sometimes it rained 'vociferously'. To Tagore, it looked as though the trees were shedding tears, the river vas swelling and the moist wind playing with leaves. Everyday, bringing thrilling experiences, was like a gilt-edged letter containing most pleasant news. Another natural scene that attracted the boy Tagore was a calm, shaded tank with a bathing platform at the back of the house. There was a very big Jambolan tree on one side of the platform. All round were thick cluster of various trees. To the poetic Tagore, the tank appeared like a shy bride retiring from public gaze. The boy used to sit under the Jambolan tree and dream of the legendary kingdom of the Yakshas within the depth of the tank.

There was an ideal Bengali village on the oilier side of tile garden wall. It contained small cottages, thatched pavilions, the lanes and bathing places, fields and markets. But Tagore was never allowed to go there. One day he saw some elders going to the villages. Tagore followed them secretly. The elders scolded Tagore and drove him back home. Tagore was deeply disappointed. He felt like a bird that had come out of its cage but had been still chained and not allowed to fly freely.

Annotations:

1. *I somehow felt the day coming to me like a new-edged letter, with some unheard of news awaiting me on the opening of the envelope.*

   This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My First Outing."

To escape from the raging dengue fever, the Tagore family took shelter in a villa hear the Ganges. Tagore was immensely happy to be in close contact with nature. Everyday brought him some surprising relations about nature. Tagore is here comparing the day to a gilt-edged letter bringing some pleasant news to the receiver.

2. .... *the sugarcane masses, which I had with cold luehis for my breakfast could not have tasted different from the ambrosia which Indra quaffs in heaven.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My First Outing".

To escape from the dengue fever, the Tagore family took shelter in a riverside villa. Tagore was immensely happy to live in close touch with nature. Even the simple food that he ate there tasted delicious to him. In his context, Tagore says that the luchis mixed with sugarcane molasses that he had for breakfast tasted like the ambrosia which Indra in heaven is supposed to eat.

3. *It was like the bride of the house, in the seclusion of her midday siester, resting on a many coloured quilt of her own embroiding....*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My First Outing".

To escape from dengue fever, the Tagore family took shelter in a riverside villa. Tagore was immensely happy to be in close touch with nature. There was a beautiful tank surrounded by fruit trees at the back of the house. Situated in a quiet place, the tank appeared like a blashful bride sleeping on a many coloured quilt. The grass sprinkled with many coloured flowers appeared like multi-coloured quilt to Tagore.

4. *Many a midday hour did I spend alone under that Jambolan tree dreaming the fearsome kingdom of the Yakshas withing the depths of the tank.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My First Outing".

To escape from dengue fever, the Tagore family took shelter in a riverside villa where he was in a position to observe beautiful natural scenes. There was a shaded tank at the back of the villa. On one side of the tank, there was a Jambolan tree; the imaginative boy Tagore used to sit under the tree and dream of the legendary Yakshas supposed to live in the depth of the tank.

The passage throws light on Tagore's dreamy nature. He is like Keats who could vividly imagine the nyads and dryads in forests.

5. *We had been in a cafe, and were now on a pench, but the chain was still there.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My First Outing".

To escape from dengue fever, the Tagore family took shelter, in a riverside villa. Tagore was allowed to sit outside and observe the beautiful natural scenes around him. But he was not allowed to go to the nearby village known for its idyllic beauty. He followed some elders who were going to that village. But they drove him back home. In Calcutta he had to remain indoors. He was like a caged bira there. In the riverside villa, he was allowed to stir out of home but not to visit other places. So Tagore compares himself to a bird that has come out of its cage but is still chained and cannot fly away.

10. Srikantha Babu

How does Tagore sketch the character of Srikantha Babu?

Srikantha Babu was a jovial man. His eyes shone with delights. He had a sweet, amiable nature. There was no trace of arid or coarse fibre in his character. Tagore says that he was like a perfectly ripe Alfonso mango. He was always puffing at his ripe bubble or hookah. He had sitar on his lap. He sang to the accompaniment of the sitar to the great delight of listeners. He took liberties with people family at a reduced rate by talking jovially with the photographer. On another occasion, he endeared himself to a European missionary by praising his lady's booted feet and caressing her little child. He behaved in such a way that nobody was offended and abused Srikantha Babu. Because of this incorrigible rudeness, he was finally dismissed. But Srikantha Babu was good natured and that his insolence was due only to his drinking habit. Srikantha Babu was not very soft-natured that he could not bear to listen to the narration of Sita sufferings in Vidya Sagar's Sita Banabas.

Srikantha Babu admired Tagore's budding poetic genius. He told Tagore's father about a sorrowful hymn written by the boy. Tagore's father appreciated the boy and wondered where from he got his ideas about the miseries of life. Srikantha Babu was himself a poet. He wrote a poem entitled. 'No more of vrager for me' and taught Moore to sing it . Srikantha Babu sang the choric part of the song loudly smiling and nodding his head and strumming the sitar.

Srikantha Babu was an admirer of Tagore's father. He set to music a hymn entitled 'He is the heart of our hearts'. When Tagore's father was bed-ridden. Srikantha Bau called on him eventhough he was too weak to walk unaided. A few days after this visit Srikantha Bahu breathed his last. Singing the hymn 'How sweet is thy mercy lord!'

Annotation:

It was not he it was the liquor: he insisted.

This passage is taken from Tagore's biographical essay on Srikantha Babu.

Srikantha Babu was kind even towards those who did him harm. There was a singer who did not like Srikantha Babu indecently. As a result he got dismissed from his job. But Srikantha Babu took pity on him and excused him, saying that he was inherently good and that his indecency was the outcome his drinking habit.

Check Your Progress Question

1. Tagore was blessed with a listener named ____.

2. ____ was like a perfectly ripe Alfonso Mango.

3 Srikantha Babu was the devoted admirer of ____.

12. The Professor

What were Tagore's experiences at the Bengal Academy?

In the essay, "The Professor", Tagoıe first describes the absence of an intellectual atmosphere at the Bengal Academy. The school authorities were keen only on collecting fees from the students. They were not bothered whether students learned anything or not. Students were rough and tough; they wrote this on their palms and slapped it on the books of unsuspecting students or dabbled banana pulp on their heads. But Tagore was very tolerant towards them. He says

that they were annoying but the Poor school building; the hostel with small dıngy rooms was like a pigeon-holed box. Students escaped from this humdrum atmosphere by playing truant. No teacher was concerned about their chronic absenteeism.

There was a Persian tutor by name Munshi in the school. He was good at English also. But his chief interests were in singlestick and singing. He used to stand in the sun and perform all kinds of odd antics with a stick; this evolved the admiration of all students. His singing was gruesome, as it was but a mixture grooming and meaning, This singing master Vishnu commented humorously that Munshi eclipsed professional singers as so much that they were in danger of losing their jobs!

At the Bengali Academy Tagore met a student who dabbled in magic. He was called, 'professor'. He had written a book on magic. Tagore thought highly of the pseudo-writer. The professor attributed magical properties to things which could be done only by Sindbad the sailor. So rare were they once one times in the juice of a kind of cactus, would flower and fruit in an hour. Tagore's brother Satya outwitted the professor by claiming that he also could make a certain mystical plant bear fruits in an hour. He fooled the professor by making him believe that Tagore was really a girl dressed as a boy to get a seat in the academy. Thus misled, the professor grew enamoured of Tagore and wrote him very tender letters.

Annotation:

....the materials of which he spoke were invariably so rare or distant that One could hardly hope to get hold of them without the help Sindbad the sailor.

Among the students who studied at the Bengali Academy, was one who dabbled in magic and was called professor by all. He talked knowingly of the magical properties of certain things which were inaccessible under normal circumstances and could be procured only by the legendary wanderer Sindbad. Tagore is here having a dig at pseudo magicians who exploit credulous people.

13. My Father

What does Tagore say about his father in this essay?

Tagore says that his father was rarely at home. He came home all of a sudden causing much excitement to the members of the family. Once he brought with him a Punjabi servant by name Lenu. Tagore was thrilled to know that Lenu belonged to a race known for heroism and military exploits. Lenu narrated to Tagore the fascinating things happening outside home. Tagore was attracted to the Kabulis because they also represented the unknown outside world.

When father was at home, people moved about noiselessly. They spat out pan and cleansed their mouths before entering his room. Children could catch a glimpse of him only from a distance. Tagore and his brothers were interested with the holy thread in a ceremonial manner. Their heads were shaved. They had to wear earrings. They did not concentrate on chanting mantras even when they were shut in a room upstairs. They took delight in teasing servants.

Tagore was ken or repeating the Gayatri. Even though he did not understand the gayatri he meditated on it with great concentration. Once, sitting alone and thinking of the Gayatri he was moved to tears. Tagore says that one can appreciate a text without understanding it. Another book which deeply affected Tagore was Jayadeva's Gita Govinda in Bengali which he picked up while travelling with his father in his houseboat. Jayadeva's novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* also cast its spell on Tagore even though he found the language very difficult. He got a vague idea about the story of the novel with the help of illustrations into the book. Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam* was also incomprehensible to Tagore but he very much enjoyed reading it. He was carried away by the melody of the verse.

14. A Journey with my Father

How does Tagore describe his journey with his father?

Tagore had his head shaved at the sacred thread ceremony. His class mates made fun of him on account of his shaven head. When his father proposed to take him on a trip to the Himalayas, Tagore felt very happy as he could escape at least temporarily from the dull school routine and also from his classmates savage mockery.

They halted al Balpur first. Tagore's nephew Satya had informed that the Balpur house was surrounded by lush rice fields where one could play with cowherds. But in reality there were no such sylvan scenes there. However, Tagore learned to like what was available instead of pining for imaginary scenes. Tagore's father gave him absolute freedom to wander about the place at will. One day Tagore came across place where rainwater had made deep furrows. The furrows were full of smooth pebbles which caught Tagore's fancy. He bundled them up in his new tunic and brought them to his father. Instead of chiding Tagore for having spoiled his dress father lauded him and asked him to adorn the hillock in the garden with the pebbles. On another occasion, Tagore came across a little spring in a ravine with plenty of fish trying., to swim up. With boyish ardour, he expressed his wish to draw water from the spring for domestic use. Father readily agreed, chiefly because he did not want to wound Tagore's feelings.

Father did everything in his power to develop Tnore's talents. He entrusted some cash to Tagore and permitted him to spend it according to his likes and dislikes. The only condition he stipulated was that Tagore should submit an account of his expenditure periodically. Tagore's accounting was faulty. Once when the balance on hand was much larger than it ought to be father did not get angry. He merely joked that money had a tendency to grow in Tagore's hands.

It was not a mere pleasure trip. Father taught Tagore valuable lessons during his leisure. He taught him the life history of Benjamin Franklin, even though Benjamin's prudence and calculating ways disgusted him. He omitted the first Sanskrit reader probably because it was too elementary and went on to the second reader. He left Tagore to learn declensions by himself. He also taught the boy Proctar's popular Astronomy and asked him to translate it into Bengali.

An unpleasant incident occurred on the way to Amritsar. Ticket examiner thought that Tagore was over twelve and demanded full fare for him. Tagore's father flared up. He threw more than the money required for the full fare at the ticket examiner. Tagore's father took his son to the golden temple at Amritsar where the Sikhs appreciated his broad-mindedness and gave him sugar crystals and sweets. Tagore won his father's admiration by singing devotional songs in the Behaga mode. When father was bedridden many years later, Tagore sang him certain soothing hymns composed by himself. One of the hymns began with the metaphysical conceit:

> The eye sees them not, who art
>
> The pupil of every eye.

Father gave him a cheque in appreciation of his poetry. Tagore wondered what delight his father could derive from reading the burdensome Rome by Gibbon.

15. At the Himalayas

What were Tagore's experiences at the Himalayas?

Tagore and his father spent a month in Amritsar and then moved on to the Dalhousie Hills. They were carried up the terraced hillsides in a Jhampon. The place was bright with flowering spring crops. A waterfall trickled down black moss-covered rocks. It was like the daughter of a heritage playing at the feat of sages lost in meditation. Tagore's curiosity to observe nature at close quarters was so great that he did not want to close his eyes. After reaching a staging bungalow, Tagore would sit out with his father and watch the blazing stars. The house which he occupied was on the top of the highest hill. So winter frosts had not melted there eventhough it was nearing May. The boy Tagore felt that the he was like a lizard.

Tagore would wake up in the small hours of the morning and watch the distant snowy peaks shimmering, in the dim starlight. Father would usually wake

up much earlier and after chanting the Upanishads take the boy out for a walk. After chanting the home, Tagore the boy had an hour of English lessons. At ten O' clock father compelled him· to take bathe in ice-cold water, telling him encouraging of the freezingly cold baths that he had in his boyhood. After midday meal, Tagore had to study in a disciplined manner. Unfortunately having got up very early, he would take pity on him and let him off. The moment he was left free, sleep would disappear and he would be off to the mountains. Holding a staff in hand, he would walk from peak to peak. Once Tagore expressed that he would take journey upto Peshawar in a bullock cart. He was objected to by telling him about the dangers and discomforts that the journey involved.

Tagore would often talk freely with his father about home. He would also read his brothers' letters to father. This practice indirectly helped him to learn the art of writing letter. During leisure father used to tell Tagore amusing anecdotes about a milkman who mixed such a large quantity of water with milk that it was fit to breed fish. He also told Tagore how he wore fit a Dacca muslin in his younger days after tearing away its rough border.

Thus Tagore spent a few months with his father at the Himalayas and then was sent back home.

Annotation

.... he wanted us to love truth without whole hearts: he knew that mere acquaintance without love is empty.

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "At the Himalayas".

Tagore is describing here his father's gentlemanliness. Father never compelled Tagore to learn his lessons. He gave Tagore absolute freedom to wander about the forest. He believed that children should be taught to follow the truth spontaneously. Anything that is brought through compulsion is valueless.

16. My Return

What were Tagore's experiences after his return home from the Himalayas?

After returning home from the Himalayas, Tagore was granted certain rights. The boy who had hitherto been confined to the servants' quarters was now admitted into the inner apartments. The youngest bride of the inner family lavished on Tagore a wealth of affection and regard. Tagore envied his sister because she did not have to go to school. Taught lessons at home, she spent her time unconcernedly. There were beautiful toys in the inner apartments but Tagore was considered unworthy to touch them.

Tagore narrated to his mother his experiences during his trip away from home with his father. Tagore added 'fresh colouring' to make the narration exciting. Mother and the other woman in the inner apartments listened to him with great interest. The woman, however complained that Tagore had not grown manly enough. Tagore told them that the Sun which appears small is in reality vaster than the earth. He thus implied that eventhough he looked small, he really had the potentialities of a great man. Tagore tried to attract the womenfolks by singing them ballads about Rama. Tagore had learned a few Sanskrit verses from Valmiki's *Ramayana.* He repeated them with plentiful additions of his own and impressed his mother and brother as a great scholar.

Tagore was shifted from the Bengali Academy to St. Xavier's where he developed a great regard for a Spanish teacher by name father Depeneranda who could not speak English with ease, but was very kind to Tagore. One day Tagore was gathering wool, without writing his copy book. Instead of reprimanding him severely, father Depeneranda asked him with a kind enquiry. Another teacher whom Tagore liked was father Henry who stunned a boy called Nirada by asking him to explain the meaning of his name. The ignorant boy came out with wrong interpretation and was mocked at by all.

Annotations:

1. *I could not make up my mind to be tied to the eternal grind of the school mil which divorced as it was from all life and beauty, seemed such a hideously crue combination of hospital and goal.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My Return".

Tagore did not want to continue at the Bengali Academy because his life there was very unpleasant. He describes the school as a mill which turns out students in a mechanical manner as if they were inanimate objects. The school looked like a hospital because the students there were unhealthy either physically or mentally. Also the school had the atmosphere of a gaol because the students did not have any freedom.

2. *.... to be worsted by one's own name would have been as ridiculous a mishap as getting run over by one's own carriage.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My Return".

At St. Xavier's there was a learned teacher by name father Henry. He asked a boy named Nirada the meaning of his name. The boy did not know it. Tagore says that to be ignorant of the meaning of one's own name is as ridiculous as to be run over by one's own carriage. Nirada foolishly replied that his name meant that which caused the absence of the sun's rays. In point of fact Nirada means the giver of water i.e., the cloud.

17. Home Studies

What was Tagore's reaction to his home studies?

Many home tutors were employed to teach various subjects to Tagore at home, Pandit Vedanta Vagish taught Tagore Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. He compelled Tagore to translate *Macbeth* into Bengali. It was such a poor translation that Tagore was glad to have lost it. Pandit Ramasarvasea found that Tagore was not interested in learning grammar and so

taught him *Sakuntala*. One Rajkrishna Mukerji advised Tagore to use a different language and metre for the witches in *Macbeth* to distinguish them from the human characters.

Tagore read all available books from one end to the other. Juvenile literature was undeveloped in those days. The books that were supplied to children were watery stuff. They exploited their childishness and failed to meet their requirements as growing human beings.

A copy of Dinabandhu's *Satires* was in the possession of a distant kinswoman who refused to lend it to Tagore and jealously kept it under, lock and key. However, when she went out to spit chewed pan, Tagore took hold of the key and read the Satires in full. A bound volume of the back numbers of an illustrated monthly *Miscellany* edited by Dr. Rajendralal Mitra was avidly read by Tagore. It contained stories of the Narwhal whale, the acts of justice of the Kazis or old and the romantic going-on of Krishnakumari. Tagore is sad to note there are no intelligent story books in India such as Chambers's or Cassell's or the Strand in England.

Tagore came across the beautiful poems of Vihariial Chakravarthi in the little Bengali periodical *Abodhabandhu* (Ignorant man Friend). These poems awoke in Tagore's mind the music of fields and forest glades. Tagore was moved to tears by the pathetic story of Paul and Virginia so much so that he imagined himself courting Virginia with the many-coloured kerchief round her head!. The Bengali literacy world was taken by storm by Bankim Chandra Chatterji's popular monthly magazine *Bangadarson*. It was an unbearable agony for Tagore to wait several days to read Chandrasekhar and Bishabriksha which were serialized in the magazine. Tagore was also interested in the poems compiled by Sarada Miner and Akshay Sarkar and in his quaint but corrupt Maithili language used by Vidyapathi in his poems.

18. My Home Environment

How does Tagore describe his home environment?

A literacy and artistic atmosphere prevailed in Tagore's house. Dramas were staged in the adjoining reception rooms and Tagore could catch them from his room. Tagore's cousin Ganendra staged a drama written by Pandit Tarkaratna. In his own small way Ganendra initiated the renaissance in Bengal. He also gave the lead in patriotic poems and songs. He could easily attract an enthusiastic band of followers. Unfortunately, this gifted man died in the prime of his youth. Ganendra's young brother Gunendra was also a talented man. He also could easily draw crowds of admires around him. A burlesque written by Tagore's elder brother was staged in Ganendra's room. It was accompanied by Akshay Mazumdar's funny antics. All this caused uproarious merry-making. Tagore's nephew Satya was awarded a prize for his academic proficiency. Tagore was happy to inform all others about Satya's feat. However, he observes that it is wrong to give rewards to children as it makes them self-conscious, One day Gunendra laughed at Tagore's inartistic use of the word 'cast' merely to facilitate a rhyming pattern. Gunendra's ridicule made Tagore withdraw the word.

Tagore's eldest brother was a budding poet brimming with imagination. From his pen surged an endless stream of poetry. His master piece 'Swapnaprayam' was a little incomprehensible to Tagore. But Tagore felt that a poem could be enjoyed without being understood.

Annotations

1. *There is no harm in making gifts to children, but they should not be rewards. It is not healthy for youngsters to be made self conscious.*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My Home Environment".

Tagore's nephew Satya was awarded a prize for academic proficiency. Tagore gladly passed on the news to others, as if he himself had got a prize. In this passage Tagore observes that it is unhealthy to give rewards even to brilliant children as. it makes them unduly sell conscious.

2. *Did we quite understand swapnaprayan? But then did we need absolutely to understand in order to enjoy it?*

This passage is taken from Tagore's essay, "My Home Environment".

Tagore's elder brother was a budding poet . From his pen surged an endless stream of poetry. His masterpiece "Swapnaprayan" was a bit incomprehensible to overage readers. But Tagore is of the opinion that a poem can be appreciated without being understood.

8.6 Tagore's 'Recollections' as an autobiography

Tagore's "Recollections" is valuable because like Wordsworth's poem, "The Prelude", it is the autobiography of a poet.

Tagore's autobiography reveals many fascinating traits of his character. His hatred of humdrum school life is shown in several places. As an underaged child he cried bitterly to go with other boys to school. This elicited his tutor's comment that at a later age he would refuse to go to school. This did come true when Tagore joined the Bengali Academy where teachers were not interested in learning. Tagore was disgusted with the way the unimaginative teachers beat up students. One boy was made to stand up on a bench holding several volumes in his hands for several hours for the simple reason that he could not repeat that the teacher said. Tagore enacted at home what his teachers did at school by severally canning the wooden bass in the varandah, imagining himself as a teacher and the bars as dull-headed students. What added to Tagore's misery was that he was subjected to compulsory tuition at home before and after school hours. He got up in the small hours of the morning to practise boring and late in the night was grilled by the English teacher Aghore Babu. He hated the English teacher so much that he associated him with Yamal.

Check Your Progress Question

4. Mention the name of Tagore's tutor who taught English lesson in the evening.

5. Which is the biggest discovery of man?

Tagore's love of nature stands revealed in several places. So horrible was school that going into the outside world was like moving from hell to heaven for Tagore. Travelling with his father by train, he did not want to close his eyes for

fear of missing some ravishing natural scene. In the boy's eyes, ordinary pebbles looked like precious stones and he came home carrying a bundle of pebbles in his tunic. He spent the night gazing at the distant peaks bathed in dim starlight. Wandering around gigantic centuries-old trees, he felt himself like a lizard!

Also stands revealed Tagore's adoration of his Father. Tagore liked his father immensely because the latter never interfered in the boy's ways, however childish and meaningless they might be. Father identified himself thoroughly with his son's aims and aspirations. When Tagore expressed a wish to go to Peshawar in a bullock Cart, father readily agreed with him. Nor did he turn down Tagore's suggestion to draw water from a nearby ravine for domestic use. He developed Tagore's budding poetic genius by encouraging him to translate some texts into English and also by listening to his singing of his hymns in the Behaga Mode and rewarding him with a cheque in appreciation of his poetry.

Tagore's Reminiscences is full of beautiful poetic passages. He often uses comparisons to make a point. An unwelcome teacher is Yama. The boy exploring a valley is Livingstone. Poetasters do damage to English just as cruel people beat up a thief. Thus Tagore's autobiography abounds in apt comparisons.

8.7 Questions

1. Write an essay on simple pleasures experienced by Tagore in his childhood days.

2. Write an essay on Tagore's early studies.

8.8 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Srikantha Babu. 2. Srikantha Babu 3. Tagore's father

4. Aghore Babu 5. Discovery of Fire

8.9 For Further Reading

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna (ed.). *A History of Indian Literature in English*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Sadana, Rashmi. "Writing in English," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Unit 9

TUGHLAQ

- GIRISH KARNAD

9.1 Introduction

Girish Karnad is one of the foremost Kannada playwrights. His play *Tughlaq* is closely interwoven around the character and activities of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, its central figure. The dramatist has taken up the last five years of the reign of Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq who ascended the throne of Delhi in 1325 A.D. and ruled India till his death in 1351. Karnad tries to maintain fidelity to history and presents the historical events and complexities of the time in an objective manner. The play is about his attempt to implement his apparently sensible schemes – the shifting of the capital, change in the currency scheme – which produce disastrous effects because of their impracticability in the given historical circumstances. The play is a tale of cruelty and unimaginable brutality.

9.2 Unit Objectives

- Historical Perspective in Karnad's *Tughlaq*
- Psycho-political study of the protagonist
- Tughlaq as living organism in the history of timelessness

9.3 Unit Structure

9.1 Introduction
9.2 Unit Objectives
9.3 Unit Structure
9.4 Indian English Drama
9.5 Life and Works of Girish Karnad
9.6 Historical Treatment: Special Introduction to *Tughlaq*

9.7 Detailed Scenewise Summary

9.8 Summation

9.9 Questions

9.10 Answers to CYP Questions

9.11 For Further Reading

9.4 Indian English Drama

Drama is a composite art; its success depends largely on the various accessories like stages, actors, audience, and dialogue. In the beginning Indian theatre was occupied, naturally, with plays written in regional languages: they were quite successful, too, simply because they were easily intelligible to the audience. But the early Indian English dramatists could not enjoy this advantage as a result of which the growth hindranced their endeavours to write plays in English.

K. M. Bannerji wrote, the first Indian English play in 1831, *The Persecuted Head or Dramatic scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindu Society in Calcutta* is a society play which presents the conflict between existing orthodoxy and emerging new ideas which western education brought with it. It is the earliest play on the East-West encounter theme which occupied the centre-stage in the entire range of early Indian English Literature. Michael Madhusudan Dutt translated his Bengali plays *Ratnavali* (1858), *Sermista* (1859) and *Is this called Civilization* (1871) into English. Ramkinoo Dun wrote *Manipura Tragedy* (1893). Indian English dramas, thus made a humble beginning in Bengal in the nineteenth century.

The Big Three in Indo-Anglian Drama

Check Your Progress Question

1. Who are the Big three of the Indian English drama?

Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Chattopadhyaya are known as the Big Three of Indian English Drama for their rich contribution. Tagore is a prolific dramatist who himself rendered some of his Bengali plays into English. His plays are remarkable for precision and well-limit plots. Nevertheless they were a failure on the stage because of their excessive symbolic lyrical quality. The musical quality

of the original Bengali plays is miserably lost in the transcreations. Tagore's plays are thematically classified into two groups : *Sanyasi*, *The Cycle of Spring*, *Chitra*, *Malini*, *Sacrifice*, *Natin Puja* and *Red Oleanders* belong to the first group of Thesis plays: *The King and the Queen*, *Kacha and Devayani*, *Karna cind Kunthi*, and *The Mother's Prayer* fall under psychological plays. While Tagore himself has translated most of his plays, *The Post Office* and *The King of the Dark Chamber* were translated by Devabratadukhayee and S.K.C. Sen respectively. In his plays Tagore has tried to imprint new values and symbolic significance to the ancient Hindu myths and legends.

Aurobindo's plays, like Tagore's, are regular potent plays entirely unfit for the stage. He wrote plays directly in English. His use of Shakespeare's blank verse is unfit for the modern stage because it sounds artificial and unnatural. He wrote five complete and six incomplete poetic plays between 1891 and 1916. *The Witch of Lini: A Drama of the Woodlands*, *Achamb and Esar*, *The Viziers of Bassora: A Dramatic Romance*, *Peresius the Deliverer* were written during his student days in England. *The Maid in the Mill*, *Love Shuffles the Cards*, *The House of Brut*, *The Birth of Sin* belong to the Baroda period (1893-1906). *Prince of Editor*, *Eric*, *Vasaradatta* were written between 1912 and 1916. Sri Aurobindo's plays lack the originality both in thought and craftsmanship which enrich his poetry.

Check Your Progress Question

2. Whose plays are unfit for the stage?

Chattopadhyaya is noted both as a poet and dramatist for his versatility. *Five plays* (1937) has a Galsworthian flair for social awareness and realism. Dialogue is written in biting prose. *The Parrot and The Window* reveal the sad predicament of the poor. *The Sentry's Lantern* symbolically expresses the hope of the dawn of a new era for the poor. *The Evening Lamp* is dedicated to those who will be able to light New Dawn of Realism. All these plays have a purpose and are suffused with realism which was hitherto unknown in Indian English drama. *The Coffin* satires the imaginary and fantastic world of the bourgeois artist while *The Sleeper Awakened* satires the evils of modern civilization: *The Saint: A Farce* is a satire on religious hypocrisy. Chattopadhyaya's plays are distinguished for

realism; yet they are poor in characterization and craftsmanship. He fails to portray vivid and highly individual characters.

Despite the remarkable and abiding, contribution of these Big Three Indian English drama 'has never revealed the high status of prose fiction or poetry' (U.R.Anantha Moorthy). Dr. Iyenger attributes the cause of the paucity of good, actable dramas written by Indian to the fact 'that the natural medium ot conversation with us... is the mother tongue rather than English and hence, unless the characters and situations are carefully chosen, it would be difficult to make a dialogue in English sound convincing.

Minor Dramatists

S.K. Ghose (*The Prince of Destiny*), K.D. Gupta (*Call for Day*), D.G.Mukherjee (*Laila Mainu*), C.S. Nazir (*The First Paris Baronet*) D. M. Wadia (*The Indian Heroine*), R. P. Muharjee (*Dally Parsen*), P.V.R. Raju (*The Prince Regained*), Krishnamacharya (*Harishchandra*), Krishna Iyer (*Lord Clive*). Naravanaswami Aiyar (*Scenes from Social Life*), Ramaswarni Shasti (*Harishchandra*) deserve mention in the history of Indian English drama. A.S.P. Ayyar wrote plays on socialistic and reformistic themes. His *Sita's Choice* is based on the theme of the remarriage of a widow. In Ayyar's plays the message is more important than craftsmanship. T.P. Kailasam's plays both in Kannada and English, are based on Puranic themes which he interpreted in the modern context. *Budden* is based on an episode from the *Ramayana* and the life of Ekalyva inspired him to write *Fulfilment. A Monologue: Don't Cry* depicts the endless sorrows of a woman's life. *Karna* or *The Brahmin's Curse*, a mini- *Mahabharata* reveals due influence of *Gita*. He is a staunch humanist.

Bharti Sorabhai, under the influence of Gandhian thought wrote *The Web of the People and Two Women*. Based on a story which appeared in Gandhi's *Harijan* he wrote, *The Well of the People* describing the pitiable plight of a widow. *Two women* highlights the conflict and tension earned by the East-West encounter. Lobo Prabhu's *Apes in the Parlour, The Family Cage, Flags of the*

Heart have dialogue with case and spontaneity. But, however, he failed to create life-like characters and his dialogue is neither effective nor convincing. Fyzee Rahim's *Daughter of Ind* deals with the love of an untouchable girl with an idealistic Englishman. S.N. Ghose, V.N. Bhushan, Armando Minzes, R.K. Narayan, K.R.S.Iyengar, D.K. Roy and B.S. Mardhekar are some other dramatists who contributed much to the development of this art. But Indian English drama, despite some monumental works, could not attain the same artistic excellence as was shared by poetry, prose and fiction in pre-independence days.

Indian English Drama in the Post-Independence Era

The monopoly of the regional languages over the Indian theatre hampered the development of Indian English drama in the post-independence era. Though Indian English literature has began to gain remarkable success and popularity abroad, Indo-Anglian plays were given occasional performances in India. The plays of the dozens of the modern drama - Asif Currimbhoy, Pratab Sharma and Gurucharan Das - were successfully staged in Europe and USA. Some Indian English dramatists like Desani were attracted by poetic drama, reviewed in 1930's and 40's by T.S. Eliot, Christopher Isherwood and Fry. After independence the inhibition that English was a foreign language left behind is to disappear slowly; Indian English dramatists could write English to express Indian social, cultural and literary ethos. The efforts of Lakhen Deb, Asif Currimbhoy and Girish Karnad are laudable in this respect.

Desani's *Hali* (1950) is the finest poetic play of this period. According to T.S.Eliot it is more a poem than a drama. It is an autobiographical play, a revelation of personal tragedy, a serious love affair. It is a symbolical Play. It was successfully staged both in London and India. Krishnaswamy's *The Future of Krishna* (1950) is another poetic play, remarkable for the flight of fancy. It has a telling message that a devotee's faith never goes in vain.

The most prolific Indo-Anglian playwright of this period is Asif Currimbhoy. His genuine feeling for drama and an outstanding sensitivity to

theatrical value made him a grand success. He has written nearly thirty plays on a wide range and variety of subjects — history, social, economical and political problems, East-West encounter, psychological conflicts, religion, art and so on. *The Tourist Mecca* is exclaimed as the best of his plays. Pratap Sharma, a vehement critic of social hypocrisy is a skilled craftsman. *A Touch of Brightness* is a realistic picture of the red light district in Bombay which exposes the religious hypocrisy. *The Professor has a Warning* deals with the problem of sex and rape.

Gieve Patel's *Princes* deals with the conflict over the possession of an invalid child. Inspired by T.S.Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* he wrote *Murder at the Prayer Meeting* which depicts the assassination of Mahatma. Nissim Ezekiel's *Three Plays* (1969) includes, *Nation: A Comedy, Marriage: A Tragi-comedy* and *The Sleepwalkers: An Indo-American Force.* Rich imagination, bold dramatic experiments and the masterly use of irony and fantasy are the special features of these plays. He published a short play *Son of Deprivation* 1969. Gurucharan Das's *Lariss Sahib* (1970) deals with a colonial India. It is a successful comical play. His *Mira* (1971) is a vivid dramatization of Mira's selfless love for God. It was successfully staged as a ballet in New York and as a play in Bombay. The theme of decadence in the modern Hindu family in dealt with in *Jukhoo Villa.*

9.5 Life and Works of Girish Karnad

Girish Karnad is one of the greatest of living Indo-Anglian dramatists. He is a versatile genius; he is not only a playwright but an actor too. He has made appearance not only on the stage but on the silver screen — both big and small — too. He was born at Matheran near Bombay on 1938. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford from 1960 to 63 and a Bhabha fellow from 1970 to 72. He was also a visiting professor and resident scholar at the Chicago University for sometime. Karnad originally wanted to be a poet but circumstances turned him a dramatist. He himself says that the lack of good plays in India drove him to choose to be a playwright rather than a poet. The influence of Shakespeare and the naturalistic drama of Ibsen and Shaw also turned the scale.

There were two kinds of theatre then. *Company Natak* plays were meant for the upper classes and Yakshagana were for the lower classes. The former were lit by gas lamps and the latter by lanterns. Karnad was attracted more by Yakshagana. But both the forms were slowly dying. Then came there Sivarame Karath to rescue them. Karnad was highly influenced by the trends in Kannada literature. He took religion, history and myth for the plots of his three plays. His first play *Yayati* (1961) reinterprets an ancient myth from *Mahabharata* in the modern context. It is a self-consciously existentialist drama on the theme of responsibility. It is a play on the theme of human relationship which has suffered a serious jolt in the modern age. The mind of modern man is disturbed by various wordly and sensuous passions; it has slowly become a dwelling place of wild and ravenous animals of worldly desires, sexual pleasures; irresponsible exercise of power and total negligence of the imperishable values of live have begun to take an upper hand. Modern man, without trying to search for or establish his non identity, is drifting like a rudderless boat on a faithless sea of life. He is in no way better than Yayati of *Mahabharata*.

Karnad's second play *Tughlaq* (1962) is a historical play. It deals with the complex and paradoxical character of Mohammed bin Tughlakh who ruled over India for more than quarter of a century. Karnad's *Tughlaq* span about just five years out of 26 years of his reign. This was reconstituted by dramatic precision and condensation. *Tughlaq* also is concerned with the theme of search of identity. The Sultan is a visionary and idealist who wants to shape his kingdom and administration according to his heart's desires. But he miserably fails to search for identity in idealism. He is disillusioned and frustrated. Karnad found Tughlaq's history contemporary. According to U.R. Ananthamoorthv no other play of sixties did reflect the political mood of disillusionment which followed the Nehru era of idealism in the country. Tughlaq is decidedly a landmark as a historical play in Indian English literature.

Check Your Progress Question

3. Name the second play of Girish Karnad.

4. *Tughlaq* covers just ___ yars of Tughlaq's reign

Karnad's last play *Hayavadana* (1970) is a bold and reviewing experiment on folk theatre. Its plot comes from *Katha Saritsakara* a collection of ancient

Sanskrit stories. But Karnad bases his play mainly on Thomas Mann's refilling of the story *The Transposed Heads* in English. Mann imparts a mock-heroic dimension to the Sanskrit tale. Karnad successfully uses the conventions and motifs of folk tales and folk theatre. Masks, curtains, dolls and story within a story have been deftly employed to create a bizarre world age. It is a play on the search for identity in a world of tangled relationships.

Devadatta and Kapila are intimate friends while the former is intellectually strong the latter is physically strong. Padmini the wife of Devadatta loves her husband for his intellect and his friend for his physique. The close friends turn into bitter enemies and they kill each other. In the subsequent scene which turns into a comic scene as well as a dramatically significant scene, Padmini transposes their heads. As a result Devadatta gets Kaipila's body and Kapila, Devadatta's. The consequent confusion of identities reveals the ambiguous nature of human personality. The worsened situation drives them to flight a duel and kill themselves again. Padmini performs sati.

These three great plays of Karnad sound all the depth of complexity. They are built on paradox. *Tughlaq* is structured on-opposites-one- ideal and the real - while *Hayavadana* abounds in paradoxes. In the very beginning of the play is the description of Lord Ganesh and the playwright cleverly strikes the key-note:

> "An elephant's head on human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly... the embodiments of imperfection of incompleteness".

Had not Karnad turned his attention to directing movies and TV programmes and acting his contribution to the theatre would certainly have better and greater making him more popular than what he is looking.

9.6 Historical Treatment: Special Introduction to *Tughlaq*

Tughlaq is Karnad's best play. It is an historical play with a judicious mixture of fact and fiction. The twenty-six years of Tughlaq's region (1324-1351) are condensed into five years (1327-1332) for dramatic precision, brevity and

concentration. The action begins in Delhi in 1327. The central character Tughlaq and a number of characters who surround him are historical: but Aziz and Aazam are dramatist's own invention. The characters and plot are suitably modified. The three unities of time, place and action are not at all observed. The action covers over five years; it begins in Delhi, shifts to the road to Daulatabad and ends in or around the fort. There is no unity of action. The episodes dealing with the woman whose child dies and the man with six kids are certainly avoidable superfluities. Besides, there is a comic sub-plot. All the same, the play is wanting in catharsis in the true Aristotelian sense. The denouement is weak and in the end Tughlaq has not been murdered but is seen sleeping confused and bewildered on his throne. Barani leaves him and goes to attend the funeral of his mother in Barran, his home town.

Karnad seems to be indebted to contemporary historians. Zia-ud-Dis Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Al-marshin's *The Maslikal-absar*, Ibn Bututch's *Travels* and Badoni's *Tarikh-r-Mubarata Shabi*. He closely follows the traditional sources which present Tughlaq as a combination of contraries — a dreamer and a man of action, benevolent and cruel, devout and godless. Tughlaq both in history and in Karnad's play is a great scholar, idealist and visionary. But as a shrewd politician he is guilty of patricide and fratricide. Karnad's hero is not repentant over these murders but the historical Tughlaq made atonement by inscribing his father's name on the coins. Karnad adversely employs historical evidence about Tughlaq's inadvertant action to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Effective administrative control of the south, according to history, is the chief cause of this change. The reasons which Karnad's hero gives for changing the capital are based on historical evidence. Convenience of the people was duly taken care of and the Daulatabad scheme was implemented in stages. Even Barani who opposed the Sultan writes that Tughlaq made liberal gifts to the people both at the time of departure for and on their arrival at Daulatabad.

Check Your Progress Question

5. The capital is shifted from Delhi to ____.

But the dramatist conveniently ignores Sultan's generosity. He presents the act of transfer as the act of a despot. He describes it as a mass exodus. In this

respect he follows the modern historians who highlight the Sultan's inhumanity and callousness. The forced exodus inflicted untold sufferings on all people irrespective of age, sex, religion, caste and creed. Relief measures provided by England, were misappropriated by corrupt officials like Aziz in the play. The old man in sec. viii gives a vivid account of the great suffering that people underwent. The suffering made the people rebellious. Tughlaq inflicted draconian punishments upon the rebels. It was not possible for Karnad to deal with all these rebellions from the view point of maintaining artistic coherence and unity of impressions. He deals in detail with the rebellion of Ain-ul-Malik, the Governor of Awadh who was transferred to Deccan. The Sultan crushed the rebellion.

In order to stress the inhumanity of Tughlaq, Karnad conveniently attend to the historical facts of this rebellion. He deputes Sheikh Imam-ud-Din in his official envoy. The Sheikh who resembles the Sultan is treacherously killed by the machination of Tughlaq and thus he gets rid of .he his enemy who incited rebellion against him in Kanpur. The historical Ain-ul-Mulk suffered a few days of indignities in prison but after release he was made the superintendent of the Royal Garden. But in the play the governorship is restored to him. Also the ghastly murder of Shahib-ud-Din is a deviation from history.

Karnad also borrows from history Tughlaq's policy of introducing token currency. This policy also failed because of the unimaginativeness and non-cooperation of the bureaucrats and subjects. It resulted in the proliferation of counterfeit coins. Karnad also refers to plague and famine which ravaged India during Tughlaq's time. But the dramatist does not sympathise with him. Najib, in history, is an unimportant character. But Karnad, by making him Sultan's evil-genius, presents as an important character. Karnad seems to have taken only a partial and one sided view of the history of Tughlaq reign. The playwright is more influenced by Barani than Ibn-Batutaham who presents an unbiased account of Tughlaq. He depends mainly on the historical sources of Barani and other historians.

The plot was deliberately written in the convention of the Company Nataka: it is a tragedy of intrigues. There are a number of murders both reported and actually done on the stage. It would have been too bornable and unbearable without the dramatic relief provided by the sub-plot. Both incident and situation are correlated with characters. Events and incidents, originating from the paradoxical actions of Tughlaq as well as his opponents are organized into an artistic whole. The details of parallelism and contrast are deftly employed. The plot is strongly based on opposites and paradoxes, the ideal and the real, the divine aspiration and the deft intrigue. In the very beginning itself the dramatist introduces tension and conflict, the essential components of the plot which are intensified by the events and actions of characters until it reaches the climax.

Rebellions become quite common which make Tughlaq deeply disappointed and frustrated. The frustration in turn, makes him revengeful. The Sultan's step-mother gets Najib, the evil genius of the Sultans, killed. He sentences her to death. The conflict reaches the climax. Tughlaq's viciousness increases. With every murder and crime he becomes more and more disillusioned and frustrated. The play ends when Tughlaq is tethering on the brisk of madness. He is unable to offer prayer to which he attached much importance. Prayer has been used as the leitmotif in *Tughlaq*. He killed his father at prayer time. The Muslim Amins, Sheikh conspire to murder Tughlaq at prayer time. In the beginning he is particular about prayer; but later at the height of frustration he makes prayer. Both Tughlaq and his opponents use prayer as a Political strategy.

The sub-plot related to Aziz and Aazam runs parallel to the main plot. It is employed for the purpose of boutique. Aziz who assumes various disguises from start to finish is the wily time server. But the irony is that he is not punished for his misdeeds but is rewarded by the Sultan. The underplot is characterized by surprise. Karnad has shown remarkable skill in weaving together the comic story of Aziz and the tragic tale of Tughlaq. In the episodes of Sheikh Imam-ud-din and Shiha-ud-din, too, both suspense and surprise are well maintained. Again the chess symbol is suggestive of suspense. No doubt, Karnad does not follow the

three unities of time, place and action but he certainly creates unity of effect. All episodes do contribute to the unity of impression. In short the plot of *Tughlaq* is an artistic whole.

Symbols

Symbols are adequately and appropriately employed in this play. Chess, prayer, pythan, vultures are the chief symbols. The chess suggests the intrigue in Tughlaq's nature. As a skilled chess player he uses his political opponents in the political chess board. Pythan symbolizes Tughlaq's barbarity and inhumanity. The surrounding vultures are but symbols of his noble ideals which have been frustrated but which too have him. His spirit knows no respite or peace.

Indian Atmosphere

As an Indian English dramatist Karnad attains remarkable success in creating a proper Indian atmosphere. To overcome the barrier of language he adopts the technique of Indianising his English. Free use of Arabic and Indian words creates the atmosphere of 14th century India when Tughlaq reigned. 'Sultan', 'Jiziya' 'Kazi-i-Mumaiik'. 'Dhobi'. 'Dar- ul- Islam', 'Darbari-i-khas' are some of the examples of Indianised expressions. Muezzain's call for prayer has been given twice in Arabic. Besides. the dramatist has successfully paraphrased some typical Indian expressions in chaste English.

Conclusion

Plot, characters, setting, style and language contribute much to create the unity of effect in the play. A talented artist. as he is adept in transforming any situation into an aesthetic experience. his dramatic technique is strongly felt for its excellence. In having transformed a dull, monotonous rule of an in human Sultan into an immortal, classic, readable and notable play lies the success of this great artist.

9.7 Detailed Scene-wise Summary

Scene One

It is the year AD 1327. The yard is in front of chief court of Justice in Delhi. There is a crowd - mostly Muslims with a few Hindus here and there. The crowd, is much eager to know the outcome of the legal battle between the state and a Brahmin. While impatiently waiting, they discuss the merits and demerits of Sultan's administration. Most of them are unhappy over the deteriorating conditions of the state. The Muslims hate him for his partiality towards Hindus in having exempted them from paying Jiziyas nor do the Hindus believe or love him. They call him a hypocrite. The ordinance to distinctly follow the Koran in letter and spirit in observing five times prayer a day does not pacify the Muslims. Both the sections of the society are critical of him.

Then the announcer comes out to announce the verdict of the case. A Brahmin, Vishnu Prasad, has filed a law-suit against the state. His land had been unlawfully confiscated by the Government officials. Hence the case. The verdict is in favour of the Hindu. The judgement is pronounced by none other than Kazi-ul-Mumalik, a judicial authority and the Chief Justice of the state. The confiscated land is returned to the Brahmin with a compensation of five hundred silver dinars; in addition, he will be accommodated in Government service for a regular income. Now the Sultan himself appears on the stage. He is proud of his impartial administration which renders justice to the affected irrespective of religion, caste or creed. He seeks the cooperation of his subjects for the attainment of his objective of imparting justice and equality to his people. Then he makes the historical announcement.

For a more purposeful life, for the progress and for a better administration he had decided to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. The expansion of his already vast empire necessitates this move. Above all, the change of capital to a Hindu-dominant city will bridge the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims; it will lay the strong foundation for religious harmony, it will remain a symbol of

religious amity and brotherhood. This declaration of the Sultan also, as much, creates a commotion in the crowd, which is already fed up with his ministers and tyranny. Their talk now turns to his cunning means of ascending the throne. He is accused, invariably by all of brutally killing his father and brother at a prayer time. He is charged with arranging a procession at a prayer time, frightening the elephant to go wild to kill both the king and the crown-prince while they were at prayer. Sheik Imam-ud-din has already raised this issue and there is a revolt in Kanpur under his leadership.

The crowd is dispersed. But Aazam alone, sometime, remains there to meet the Brahmin coming out. Aazam recognizes him. He is none other than his friend Aziz who explains how he played this trick. Encouraged by the Sultan's open declaration that Hindus, too, can sue the Sultan, if necessary, he disguised himself as a Brahmin: he purchased the confiscated land from the affected Brahmin with a back-dated deed. Then he sued and reaped rich dividends. He donned the robes of Brahmin simply because then only the Sultan could brast of his impartiality. He extracts a promise from his friend to maintain secrecy. Then he invites to join him as his subordinate, for, now, he is a civil servant. Aazam, an ordinary pick pocket, gladly, accepts the offer and follows him.

Critical Analysis

The opening scene of a play is generally in three ways. It introduces the main characters; arrests the attention of the audience and strikes the key note of the play. The opening scene in *Tughlaq* fulfils thus all these requirements. A large gathering of both Muslims and Hindus, awaiting the verdict of a law suit for a Hindu against a Muslim State has all the power to arrest the attention of the audience. The hero is introduced in the opening scene itself. The dramatist deftly analyses his character by means of the conversation of the gathering. If the Sultan is running and crafty in killing his brother and father his subjects are no less cunning. One of them is able to cheat the Sultan himself by disguising himself as a Hindu. By hinting at the revolt in Kanpur, by lighting at the glowing hatred of people for the Sultan, the dramatist strikes the key note of the play too. Besides

the hero, Aziz and Aazam, the two common rogues who are to play crucial role, are also introduced here. Thus the opening scene proves to be an important era.

Scene Two

It is a room in the palace. Muhammad is bent over a: chess-board, smiling with suppressed excitements. The step-mother enters. He proudly informs her of having solved one of the most difficult and famous problems in chess. But she is least interested in chess. She is much worried about his sleeplessness at nights. To this, he replies in fine rhetoric. He wants to excel his predecessors in his cave for the common man. The problem of prosperity and welfare of his people wings him down. Moreover the Almighty has mercifully gifted him only one life. He doesn't want to waste it away in sleep. Hence sleepless nights. Then they take turns to the rumour that is spread all over the country about him. He would like to know whether she believes it. He grows tense; his own mother believes it; the whole court believes it; (his) Amirs believe it. He again questions her whether she also believes that he is behind the death of his father and brother; without answers to that query she directly she chides him for calling her step-mother. Then come there his vizier Najid and friend Barani; the former is a politician and the latter, a historian. Najib brings two pieces of information — one is that Sultan has just less than six thousand soldiers to fight against the mighty army of thirty thousand soldiers headed by his boyhood friend Aimul-Malik who is marching against Delhi; the second is that Sheikh Imam-ud-Shin the kingpins of rebels has come to Delhi from Kanpur. Muhammad expresses his desire to seek his blessing before marching to war. But Najib advises him to get rid of the Sheikh. Then Barani passes on the valuable information that the Sheikh resembles the Sultan.

A wordy duel ensues between Najib and Barani about the Sheikh. Najib is up against the Sheik for his pivotal role in the rebel against the Sultan in Kanpur. But Barani is all praise for the Sultan for his indefatigable courage, honesty and impartial justice. Sultan himself has invited open and healthy criticism. Hence Sultan should allow such people like Sheikh to voice their opinion freely, frankly and totally. It will certainly glorify the Sultan more. But as a true politician, Najib

doesn't find any place for honesty and justice in politics. According to him all is well that ends well and everything is fair in politics as in love and war. Hence he is bent upon doing with the Sheikh by hook or crook. He continues to poison Sultan's mind about Aimul Malik too. He cleverly recalls the reaction of Malik when he was transferred to Deccan from Avadh as Governor. He then suspected the Sultan himself. So he also deserves death-penalty. Then Najib endorses the view of Barani that both the Sultan and the Sheikh look alike.

The Sultan makes up his mind, he passes orders for the army's march to Kanauj; in his absence the administration of Delhi will be in the hands of Najib and Shihab-ud-din whom the Sultan has invited for that purpose. Barani seems to be upset with these plans. But Sultan is adamant. He'll play the game in his own way. The Sultan and his 'vizier leave; the step mother and the historian are left alone. She is proud of her son's diligence and intelligence. She shares her grief of her son's sleeplessness with Barani. She discloses the fact that Najib is not in her good books. Hence she requests Barani to be with Sultan always so as to protect him from the evil forces like Najib. She is so angry with Najib that she is not ready to *'wish his fate even on a dog. Barani, driven to tears by her maternal concern, looks up startled by the venom in her voice.'*

Critical Analysis

Almost all the important characters are introduced in his scene both directly and indirectly. When Muhammad's friends and well-wishers are introduced directly his foes are referred to. The many sided personality of Tughlaq is brought out here. In his reply to his mother in his restless nights he shows himself as a poet; when the scene opens he proves his skill in solving the most complicated problems in chess. The game of chess sharpens his wits with which he makes all moves to outdo and undo his enemies in politics. Najib proves himself a typical politician when he advises the Sultan. On the other hand Barani is the real well wisher of the Sultan who tries to put him on the right path. Above all, it is the step mother who attracts us most in this scene. She is able to distinguish between Najib and Barani though both of them are close friends of her

son. Her maternal concern moves even Barani, the historian to tears. Thus this scene is important in introducing the key characters and their minds.

Scene Three

The scene opens with an announcement about a public meeting *after the prayer in the yard in front of the Big Mosque*. Sheikh Imam-ud-din, a reversed saint will address the gathering, analysing *His merciful Majesty's administration to show where His majesty had inadvertently taken wrong measures-harmful to the country*. Citizens all are requested to attend the meeting in large numbers. But the scheduled time of meeting there is none except the *Sultan and a few odd servants of the palace*. The Sultan expresses his deep regret over the dislike and disinterestedness of the people to lighten it so great a saint as the Sheikh. The retorts that the boycott of the people should give the Sultan happiness and peace of mind. But Sultan disagrees. He himself has arranged the meeting so that not only his citizen but he also can be benefited by the wise counsel of the Sheikh. He sends for his courtiers. But the Sheikh is not ready to address the bootlickers. He would deliver his message to only those who would listen, think and act. Hence be would address the public in the market place the next day.

The Sheikh then refers to the physical likeness but he points out that in thinking they-are poles apart. But the Sultan defends himself. He is the true follower of Islamic tenets in letter and spirit. But the Sheikh repudiates. At the same time he doesn't suspect the Sultan's scholarship. Instead of seeking the assistance of Ulemas in religious matter, the Sultan has put them behind the bar. No doubt he is a mighty monarch with enormous, erudite scholarship, deep learning, sharp interest and abundant talent. But without using these resources for the spread of Islam far and wide he exploits them to become another God which is an unpardonable sin in Islam. The Sultan justifies his action. He cannot endure politics and religion mixing together. *As God's most humble Slave* he has put them in prison. Sheikh's sarcasm that *slaves have often tried to replace their masters* provokes him for he finds a reference to his grand father, a slave-turned-king.

The Sultan is up against the religious persons entering into politics. The Sheikh warns him that such verbal distinctions would lead but to destruction. The Sultan agrees. He knows the fate of Socrates who was given poison, also of Plato. But he is a visionary like Buddha and Zorastrian. He would not allow his citizens to be like dumb carde to be easily driven this way or that; he'd teach them to think for themselves and act.

The talk once again turns to the public meeting. The Sultan lets the cat out of the bag. None turns up to the meeting simply because the people grew suspicious of the Sheikh. The Sheikh's acceptance to address the meeting organized by the Sultan has tarnished his image. He is no more a saint but a spy of Sultan. Now only the Sheikh is able to see though the cunning plot of the Sultan. Congratulating the Sultan he prepares to leave. But the Sultan stops him. He has a request to make. He informs him of Ain-ul-Mulk's march and seeks his assistance to stop him by going in *royal envoy*. It's a news to the Sheikh; he is astonished to learn that so intimate a friend should raise his voice and sword against the Sultan. When the Sheikh hesitates, the Sultan threatens him that his refusal would result in the shedding of Islamic blood Muslim killing Muslims.

He asks how Ain-ul-Mulk would believe him when all think him to be the spy of Sultan and Tughlaq has an answer ready. Before the news reaches him, he would meet him, that too, outside Delhi. The Sheikh has attacked the Sultan for inaction. Now there is a chance to prove his mettle. The Sheikh is caught. He has no alternative. Immediately the robes of honour for the royal envoy are brought. The Sheikh wonders at the confidence of the Sultan in having everything ready. Yet he has a question to ask. Why should he meet Mulk outside Delhi? Again there is a convincing answer. The Sultan wants to have his army in a safe place if Ain-ul-Mulk refuses to listen to the Sheikh. Now the Sheikh openly praised him for his cleverness. He puts on the robes. Muhammed places the head-dress on his head. They stand facing each other. The dress makes them look even more alike.

Critical Analysis

The scene is, no doubt, too short. But it is quite impressive and informative. It brings to the fore the cunning mind of a calculative chess player. The Sultan takes the Sheikh into confidence by organizing a meeting to be addressed by him. And at the same tıme he puts him to much disgrace by preventing the public from attending the meeting. Again by persuading his most hostile critic to act on his envoy he proves himself a shrewd politician. And the altercation between the Sheikh and Sultan throws sufficient light not only on their different views but also on their deep learning and argumentative powers. Thus this scene brings out yet another face of the Sultan. The face of a talented chess player, the face of the Machiavellian Prince the face, of the courageous knows how to hold him against heavy odds. It seems he has already hatched a plan in mind to exploit the physical likeness of himself and the Sheikh.

Scene Four

The step-mother comes to meet Shihab-ud-din in his room. He feels elated and much honoured. But she is much worried about her son's silence for more than a week. She is anxious to know the happenings in the battlefield. However, she praises Shihab-ud-Din for his able administration in the absence of her son. She is all praise for her son for having chosen so efficient an administrator. She is not pleased when Shihab gives credit to Vizier Najib for all that.

Then Ratan Singh, the adopted brother of Shihab, enters with the news of the return of the Sultan. The step-mother is surprised at the secret way of her son's return; her shock is doubled to know that her son, without coming to meet her first, has gone to meet Najit. Ratan Singh pacifies her. The Sultan is upset because of the unforeseen death of the Sheikh in the battlefield. This news shocks her terribly. She couldn't believe this. Then the Sultan comes there. He seems to be much pained at the terrible sight of the death of the Sheikh. It's great loss to Islam.

Asked about Ain-ul-Mulk he coolly says that he is let free. Not only that. He is once again made the governor of Avadh with an assurance of retaining him

there till last. All are surprised. But the Sultan explains that it is an honour to his efficiency in chess. Mulk has proved himself a more-skilled player in chess. He could spot the flow in the probation in a fraction of a second, in the solution of which the Sultan spent so many sleepless nights. As usual Barani and Najib cross words over this issue. The historian feels forgiveness is the best means of vengeance. But the historian differs. According to him the Sultan's act would be really tossing another torch into the chaos at Avadh. As Barani himself is good, says Sultan, he sees goodness in everything while Najib, as a politician suspects everything. It is announced that there will no festivities to celebrate the victory as Delhi will observe day of mourning or Sheikh Imam-ud-din. All except the two brothers leave.

Ratan Singh doesn't have any regard for the Sultan whom he calls an honest scoundrel. He murders a man calmly and then actually enjoys the feeling of guilt. Shihab doesn't understand him. He has a high opinion of the Sultan for his impartiality. Again Ratan Singh sarcastically remarks that Hindus as vell as Muslims are dying with absolute impartiality. He was a warrior in the royal army. He has narrowly escaped death, though the displeasure of the king put him in the front rank of the platoon. The Sheikh then came on a royal elephant as a peace emissary. He was all dressed up in royal robes, a royal turban, even royal slippers. In fact he looked exactly like the Sultan.

The Sultan was hiding behind some hills with the rest of the army. When the Sheikh stood up to declare his purpose, when a trumpeter on the royal side sounded the charge. The battle began. Ain-ul-Mulk didn't start it but the king. Sheikh's fact was twisted with fear. Before he could raise his voice against the battle he was silenced to death. Arrows poured into him and within minutes he looked a gory human porcupine. The enemy was convinced that the Sultan was dead. The mistaken identity led the enemy into the trap that was already laid by the King. Ratan Singh concludes that Sheikh was murdered in cold blood.

Ratan Singh then tells his brother that the nobles of the court and important citizens of Delhi are going to hold a secret meeting. As Singh has

escaped the attempted murder of the king he is also invited. They have requested him to extend the invitation to his brother-too. And Singh hopes that Shihab won't be too apathetic to the attempted murder of his adopted brother. Shihab remains silent but turns pale.

Critical Analysis

Like scene three it is also short but its no less important for it shows the Satanic face of the Sultan. He is an adept in hiding his feelings with sugar-coated words. He is able to deceive one and all. Though he knows he is surrounded by numerous enemies his measured steps enable him to conquer all. With the arrow he pierces many. His unsurpassable skill in chess teaches him how to exploit any situation in his favour. Thus the facial resemblance of himself and the Sheikh largely helps in getting rid of two enemies at once. The Sheikh is trapped into death and Ain-ul-Mulk is trapped into captivity. By freeing the worst enemy he shows himself generous which he is really not. The step-mother has genuine concern. Barani has noble heart. Najib's political observations are the other things that are revealed here. The dramatist cleverly ends the scene with a suspense note leaving the readers and audience anxious about the outcome of the proposed secret meeting of the nobles and citizens.

Scene Five

The secret meeting of the rebels, referred to in the preceding scene, takes place here. In a home in Delhi there is an assembly of Amirs and Sayyids. Shihab-ud-din and Ratan Singh are also there. In the very beginning itself Shihab openly expresses his unwillingness to participate as he is an outsider in Delhi. But the Amirs seek his co-operation because at present, he is the only trustworthy administrator of the Sultan. Moreover the people in Delhi never trust each other. They have to have an outsider to lead them. The courtiers are up against the shifting of capital. For they would be fish out of water in a Hindu City like Daulatabad. Nor could they back in Delhi because they have to be in the capital. As a result they'll have to lick his feet.

They heap charges on the Sultan. The chief of them is his violation of Koranic tenets. While the Koran sanctions only four taxes he levies a lot. Even for checking and gambling they have to pay tax. But Shihab sees the other side of the coin. He praises the Sultan for his welfare activities like building schools and hospitals. He has come with another charge. Jisiya, which is permissible under Islamic law is waived; infidels are treated on brothers of Muslims. This is too much for Shihab. He opines that they don't deserve to kiss the hem of Sultan's dress. He gets ready to leave. At this point an old man who has been sitting in a corner all along steps forward.

Shihab-ud-din is startled to know that he is none other than Sheikh Shams-ud-din Tajuddarfim, a holyman of repute. The Sheikh never wanted to get minded up in the treacherous game of politicians. But the Sultan's handling of religious people has forced him out of the mosque. Some are in prison and some in exile. Above all, Sheikh Imam-ud-din was brutally murdered. While his brethren do thus suffer how can he lead a peaceful religious life. But Shihab defends the Sultan again. It is not the Sultan but the total boycott of Delhi people is the real culprit. They reveal yet another shocking secret. It is the order of the Sultan that prevented the people from attending the meeting. The soldiers were posted at every point to see whether anyone turned upto that meeting,. Sheikh Shams-ud-din himself was wounded by the soldiers when he tried to force his way to the Big Mosque.

All try bring him to their side in the name of Islam so that the Sheik Imam's story is not repeated in future. Though half convinced he doesn't feel strong enough to fight the Sultan. His father would be better choice of whom the Sultan is afraid. .Again there is a shocking revelation that its not going to be an open war. Ratan Singh advises him not to consider treachery a sin or an offence. Shthab-ud-din's father himself had inspired the Kingdom of Ratan Singh by killing his father by treachery. Then Ratan Singh unfolds the plan. The prayer time is chosen for the attack. For, then only the patience will be unarmed. The muezzin's call to prayer will be the signal attack.

When the Amirs object to killing of a Muslim at prayer he silences them by recalling Sultan's act of killing his father at prayer. Though it an insult to Islam to stain prayer time with the blood of the Mussalaman they are quite convinced that the Islam will benefit in the long run. Sheikh Shamsud-din requests Shibah not to pollute the time of prayer is turned down, because Islam does not work only at prayer and the Lord will not mind an interrupted prayer.

Critical Analysis

The magnitude of the opposition to Tughlaq is well presented here. He has enemies not only outside the palace but also inside. Not only the poor but also the richest are against the Sultan; not only the common man but also the courtiers raises their voice and swords against their ruler. The political manouer of the Sultan have turned the religious heads against him. Moreover this scene throws light on other two things too. On the one hand he acts as their well wisher and on the other he secretly makes arrangements to dishonour them. Secondly the cause of Shihab's adoption of Ratan Singh as his brother is disclosed here. The rebels succeed in whetting Shihab, the confidant of the Sultan to their side. Their arguments are logical and convincing as well. They are so powerful as to transform the most trusted administrator of the Sultan into the most bitter enemy. Once again the dramatist keeps the readers and audience in suspense. No doubt the plan is unfolded. But the success of any plan lies in its neat and timely and flawless execution. The readers as well as audience are quite anxious about the outcome of the plan. In making the audience come to the edge of the chairs and in making the readers mentally agitated lies the success of any dramatist and Girish Karnad achieves it quite easily.

Scene Six

Muhammad, Najib and Barani are in the dace. There is an eerie silence. Muhammad is restless and paces up and down. Then come there the Amirs for the Darbar-I-Khas. The Sultan is in a hurry to go for prayer. He would wind the meeting with the information of the King, if there be no special problem. The first

information is that Ghiyas-id-din Muhammad, a member of the hallowed family of Abbasid Khalifs is to visit the capital on royal invitation. The Amirs reveal their ignorance of so famous a descendant of the inhabit. But the Sultan doesn't mind it. He has invited the Khalif not to placate the stupid priests but to find a solution to the problem which inwardly eats him. He wants to know with what right be can call himself a king. Is it because he is the son of a king or because of self-confidence. The courtiers are either silent or advise him what he should not do but not what he should. So he is seeking an answer in blessings the Abbasid Khalif Before his arrival, the Sultan assures, the capital will have been changed. Shihabuddin's objection to this move is turned down.

In the same way, the introduction of copper-coin to replace the silver ones is strongly criticized. But the Sultan stresses it's the question of confidence. To strengthen his view he cites the example of China where paper currency is accepted. When one of the Amir murmurs that he's mad the Sultan wants him to express himself boldly and openly. He can be ritualized, criticized but never mistrusted. He pleads their support for building a new future for India: to win their support he is ready to kneel before them. So saying he suddenly kneels before them. The Amirs almost recoil at this sudden gesture when they promise their supports he wants them to take an oath on Koran. Shihab, on behalf of all, expresses the unwillingness to do so. The Sultan controls his range.

The hour of prayer is come. The Sultan has changed his mind. Without going to the mosque he'd pray there itself. As soon as the Muezzin's call begins, Muhammad unbuckles his sword and places it on the throne, They start praying, led by Muhammad. Half way through the prayer there is a commotion; Shihab and other Amirs get up and pull out their daggers. Their approach to Muhammad was suddenly stopped by about a score of Hindu soldiers who were hidden behind the curtains. All the Amirs are dragged away. Shihab alone is retained there. While all this is going on Muhammad goes on praying unconcerned. Shillab-ud-din is shocked to know that his adopted brother Ratan Singh has betrayed him. He

has thus avenged the killing of his father. Yet without losing heart he challenges the king.

He threatens him that his father will have revenge on him. But his letters advanced to his father had already been forwarded to the Sultan by Ratan Singh. Now he feels he is caught inescapable trap. Muhammad stabs him. His anger is so uncontrollable that he goes on stabbing the corpse beheading of every soldier. Not only that, their bodies are to be shifted with straw and sent round the kingdom. He announces that Shihab has made the supreme sacrifice in his attempt to save the Sultan from the daggers of the Amir. He will be honoured with a State funeral which will be attended by his father.

Then he passes orders for the immediate evacuation of Delhi. He has hitherto been too soft. If people will understand the whip is ready to latsh. Another startling order bans prayers in the kingdom. But Najib advises him to modify this orders that the prayers are suspended till the arrival of Abbasid Khalif.

Critical Analysis

The most wicked force of Tughlaq is shown for the first time in this scene. There have been reference to rumours about his killings. But here he is for the first time, seen killing his own confident. He is not unaware that he is made a butt of; subjected to reathing criticism and mistrust. But he is least bothered about public opinion; now will he give a patient hearing to the carriers. He is adamant to achieve what he thinks. Again, he proves himself a talented player by making proper countermoves. Thus he is able to kill Shihab-ud-din. And even the deed are not free from his politics. He killed Shihab: hut he turns his death into his favour by making him a martyr and offering him a state funeral. Thus the sharp intellect of the ruler comes to the fore in this scene. In his arguments he shows himself clever: in begging the support of the courtiers he shows flexibility; in killing the rebels his dignity and in turning the killing in favour his political mind. Thus Tughlaq is all-pervasive in this scene.

Scene Seven

This is a scene where Tughlaq doesn't make his appearance; yet his presence is strongly felt because by his corrupt officials. When the ruler is an eccentric, its but natural that his officers are but corrupt, Aziz and Aazam, the two petty thieves are in that of the evacuated camp on the Delhi-Daulatabad road where this scene takes place. Aziz continues to be in the Brahmin's dress. A Hindu woman kneels before him, cries for the medical assistance for her ailing child but Aziz who never helps anybody without his balm being greased, turns a deaf ear to her;. even Aazam is moved. But Aziz convinces him that the child won't suivive. Then comes there a couple with six children. The burial of a couple of corpses on the way causes their delay. He is to undertake guard of executed bodies. The non-payment of fine by the relatives of the dead lower him poor still. According to him all are like this. The most crucial part of his story that he is yet to marry the woman who has born him six kids.

Aziz and Aazam while alone discuss their future. Aazam is tired of his life; he anticipates trouble and wants to quit. But Aziz shows him a new path. Politics, according to him, is the softest place for people like him. All these days they there were making money by thieving. But here after they will mint money. They will put Sultan's soldier of copper coins of their benefit. They will make copper coins and exchange them for silver dinars.

Scene Eight

It is five years after the shifting of the capital (A.D.1332). The scene takes place in the fort at Daulatabad. The fort was built under the direct supervision of Muhammad himself when he was just 21. There is a long passage, a big passage, wild like an enormous hollow python inside the belly of the fort. No army could take this; if this fort ever fails it will crumble from the inside. There is no fort as strong as this anywhere in the world. Before it lies the-snake-like road to Delhi.

There are two watchman-the young, the other past his middle age: from their conversation it is learnt that the fort is but an eagle nest for the men of the

plains. The old man was fortunate to survive during the change of capital; but his family members were more fortunate to have died. Despite the perfect arrangements made by the Sultan people died because of their excessive love for their birth-place and native-place from which they could not separate themselves. And the old man feels he'd be far, far happier when that python breaks out and swallows everything in sight - every man, woman, child and beast.

Again comes there the Sultan. He shares his rare and thrilling experiences which he had while he stood on the edge of the fort with the young guard. Barani comes and joins them. The Sultan envies the historian for his ability to peacefully sleep or read at night. The Sultan can do neither. He who prayed for sleeplessness four years back is now laying for sleep, which, however eludes him. He is much vexed. The growing opposition in every nook and comer of the country heighten his tension and vexation. In the whole of the kingdom he has only two trust-. worthy friends — Shiab's father and Ain-ul-Mulk. He seeks the advice of Barani to find peace of mind for neither a hakim more a whole-hearted prayer in Mecca could give him that.

The historian praises the ruler for his erudite scholarship. He rightly advises him that peace can be found only in the company or learned men not in the market of corpses. But the Sultan reads between the lines. He cannot abdicate the throne without killing himself. He is fully surrounded by vultures, which are his own sins and from whose sharp and piercing beak there is no escape at all. No doubt Barani calls him learned but people call him mad. How can he then become wise? Barani recommends the return to love of and faith in God will help him. This is also unacceptable for it would mean the confession of mistaken aim of part life. For the Sultan is quiet convinced that he has made no mistakes in life. Whatever he did was right which would open the eyes of history. Within this only one fife he is endowed with as much to accomplish. Their conversation is interrupted by the shocking news of the sudden and unforeseen death his vizier Najib, that too by murder.

Critical Analysis

The scene beautifully presents the tortured soul of Muhammad; he is born spiritually. Like Satan he fired hell wherever he goes, for, he himself is hell. The vultures that he imagines to prey upon him are but his sins. That he is a learned man is endorsed by no less a learned historian than Barani. Yet he searches for peace from without which can be found and even, his prayer is more ritualistic than spiritualistic. He is guilty of cold murder — his mother to death. The conversion between the Sultan and the young guard brings out the imaginary qualities of the ruler. The advice of the historian reveals his deep understanding and human mind. And as usual the dramatist ends the scene in suspense. The killing of his beloved vizier baffles not only the ruler but also the readers and audience. It is to be who is behind the murder.

Scene Nine

This is yet another scene where Tughlaq doesn't appear at all where the craftiness of Aziz is further exposed; where Aziz proves himself no less clever and cunning than the ruler; where the insatiable desire to prosper more drives the petty thief from punishable offence to unpardonable sin.

It's a hide-out in the hills. Aziz and Aazam are stretched out on the floor. Aziz has peculiar and perverse views of life. There's no happy soul on earth. A crime alone will lead to the recognition of virtue in one and so on. Aazam's advice to be content with the present life is pooh-poohed because, for him sky is the limit. He has to reach the pinnacle. Then he'd make Aazam an Aair, but Aazam prefers to be nominated a court-thief because stealing in his forte. Then comes there Karim with the goods that will slowly but surely take him to his goal.

Its Ghiyas-ud-din Abbasid, the descendant of Khalif when the Sultan is expecting in Daulatabad. Aziz retends that there has been a grave mistake; with feigned ignorance and pretence to make amends he extracts the necessary information from him. He spread a soap as nicely and cunningly that Ghiyas-ud-din falls into the trap like a mouse. He pours out all information about him that he

is the descendent of Khalif; that he's on his way to the capital: that he has the introducing letters and the ring of recognition from the King; that he has protected himself from the treacherous men and robbers on the way with these weapons only. He assures them of due honour and shifts from the King if they allow him free and accompany him to the palace. But Aziz has made up his mind. He will not go with him; he will go in his place.

Now it's the turn of Ghiyas-ud-din to beg for mercy as he sees a threat to his life. He embraces Aziz's legs and prays for life. Then he gives Aziz a sudden push. Aziz falls down on the floor. Ghiyas-ud-din runs out. But Aazam stops him and strangles him, makes fun of him and laughs. He sings and dances in a circle, clapping his hands. Aazam looks at him angrily. Then slowly his face breaks into a smile and soon he is laughing.

Critical Analysis

This scene focuses on the cleverness and cunningness of Aziz. He is no less clever, no less cunning, no less artful than Tughlaq. For the fulfilment of their hearts desires both will go to any extent. He is as selfish and as self-centred as the Sultan. Both are adept in exploiting any situation for their own good. And Aziz proves himself a better schemer because he is able to deceive the Sultan himself. That's why an ordinary dhobi can so easily rule in life. First as a poor batonia and now as a descendent of Khalif he's able to win the favour of the state. There lies his skill and wisdom.

Scene Ten

The most villainous nature and cruel face of Tughlaq is revealed here. He inflicts the most unkindest out of all on none other than his step-mother who considers him as her life. But the power-monger has faith in not words but the sword. His skin drips with blood and he knows not how much of it is his and how much of others.

The introduction of copper coins has boomeranged. The counterfeit coin making has flourished as a cottage industry. As a result here are five hundred carts of counterfeit wins to be exchanged for silver dinars. But refusal to exchange them now will lead to twin defect – it will not only break the national economy but also turn the law maker into a law-breaker. So he decides to send these wins to the treasury but to the rose garden. The rose garden was specifically designed by the poet in Sultan; every rose in it was to be a poem and every thorn to prick and quicken the senses. But a funeral has no need for a separate symbol.

The reference to funeral takes the conversation between Tughlaq and his step mother to the killing of Najib. She is happy that Najib is dead. It's a blessing in disguise for Tughlaq who is at last freed from the clothes of the evil genius. Seven years ago when he came to the throne, he was glorious, idealistic and full of hopes. But now his kingdom has become a kitchen of death – all because of him. More in sorrow than in hunger, she advises him to refrain from the hunting of Amirs for his killing. But Tughlaq is not a man to be so easily cowed down. So he repudiates her. Najib, according to him, is a well-wisher and wise counsellor. He advised him to hold back his sword for the stability of the throne. He was, infact, loyal, not to the sultan but to the throne. He is hunting the Amirs not for nothing. He is fully aware that the Amirs know the murderer. Hence four of them fled. The fifth, Amir Jalal-ud-din, committed suicide.

The outbursts of the Sultan trapped the step-mother into a tight corner. She has no alternative than confessing her role in poisoning the minister. In the beginning he doesn't believe her; he thinks she tells a lie in order to protect the real culprits. But her persistence finally succeeds. He is infuriated. He accuses her of murder for climbing the political ladder which she denies. But the enraged ruler sentences her to death — to be stoned to death publicly — a sentence usually pronounced for adultery.

After she is dragged to jail he is broken down. He kneels down in prayer. He pities himself for having become a big rolling in this glory mud. He prays for His Intimate Mercy without which he can neither raise nor cleanse himself. Then

enters Barani with the joyful news of the coming of Ghiyas-ud-din in a month. Then the prayer can once again be legalized. Tughlaq confides that he is not able to pray even. His prayer is more ritualistic than spiritualistic. He is guilty of cold murder of his mother to death even without being sure of her guilt. It is true that he is reentering on the bank of madness.

Critical Analysis

The transformation of a poet King into a cold blooded murderer is complete in this scene. As a poet he had the aesthetic sense to design rose garden where every rose would be a poem and every thorn would brick and quicken the sense. In due course the murderer cum power-monger began to replace the poet in him. He was instrumental in killing his own father, brother and Sheikh Imam-ud-din. And he himself directly killed Shihab-ud-din. But when his friend was poisoned to death by his step mother he is angry. He is so prejudiced and blind folded that he fails to realize the spirit behind the act. For him all murderers invariably have only one motive — power. But he is not unconscious of his fall. The prayer at the end of the scene is a clear proof of his awareness of his rail. In violation of his own law banning prayers in the State he kneels down. But he could only find war tenant by mote which left no echo in the heart that means the fall is complete.

Scene Eleven

This scene is, no doubt short but it is quite important and impressive as it presents the people's upheaval. There is an announcement about the arrival of Ghiyas-ud-din Abbasis, a holy member of a proud and long ancestry of religious heads of the sacred Mecca. In his coming, the ordinance banning prayers in the country is repealed. Hence forth every Muslim will pray five times a day as enjoined by the Holy Koran and declare himself a faithful slave of the Lord. But the people are agitated. They want food not prayer. A hungry stomach cannot harbour a heat that can pray. Not even a single town or village in the country is

free from starvation which has driven the people to eat anything — from bark of a tree to the skin of a horse.

Aziz, in disguise of Ghiyas-ud-din, and Aazam as his follower arrive. Muhammad and his entourage step down from the fort; though stares at Aziz, as if he recognized him; the Hindu woman who lost her child because of the mercilessness of Aziz also stares at him. The Sultan welcomes him. He reports that the suspension of prayers till the arrival of this holy spirit has caused the flesh sin to burn their corps. He falls to his feet as he is the only and true Saviour. Everyone kneels following the Sultan. Muhammad gets up. They embrace again and they depart.

Having recognized Aziz, the Hindu woman shouts that he was the killer of her child. But the crowd thinks it's the Sultan that is the killer; in their opinion none else in that country can do such a heinous crime as infanticide. He is accused of starvation deaths, that amounts to murder. They begin to shout in protest. There is confusion. Some of them mob the soldier and beat him. A group of soldiers arrives and starts beating them, ordering them to keep quiet. The riots begin.

Critical Analysis

The man psychology is very well brought out here. A casual reference to the eating of the bark of trees leads to various other references of food-items such as skin of horse, blood of slaughtered beasts etc. In the same way the fight against army is initiated by killing a soldier. The infection spreads; the soldiers are beaten and the riots begin. The difference in the attitudes of the Sultan and his subject is also hinted at here. Both recognize Aziz in disguise of the holy man. But the king wants to continue the show he began and hence not only keeps quiet but also falls, on the feet of the imposter. But the Hindu woman who has no ulterior motive, shouts. But unfortunately she is misunderstand by the crowd who strongly believes that the country has no murderer except the king himself.

Scene Twelve

It's the parting of friends for ever. Aziz, as Ghiyas-ud-din and Aazam as his disciple are enjoying a luxurious life in the palace. Yet Aazam is scared to death. Through the secret way in the palace which he had found out on the very day of his arrival there he had been to the city twice. The streets are full of dead bodies — corpse and flies. The people rest a while either because of tiredness or to dispose of the bodies. Then they renew their fight with doubled strength. The presence of the sleepless Sultan at midnight in the rose garden play with the heaps of the counterfeit coins frightens him more. So he is not able to agree with his friend Aziz that the palace is the softest place in the country. Hence he has made all arrangements for the escape of both of them. He has bribed two servants; he has packed their belongings on the backs of two horses; the horses will arrive any time. Just they have to leave. But Aziz is not ready to forego anything for the sake of his dear but foolish friend. Aazam's pleadings were in vain. He bids farewell and leaves. Aziz calls him idiot.

9.8 Summation

Girish Karnad is regarded as a very significant playwright of the post-Independent Indian literature. *Tughlaq* is a notable contribution to the development of Indo-Anglian drama. The play has an intricate plot, a scope for spectacle, and dramatic conventions like the comic pair, Aazam and Aziz, to which the theatre audience respond instinctively. Karnad does not like to keep Tughlaq as a cosmetic mummy in the textuality of timelessness and presents him as a living organism in history's timelessness. *Tughlaq* is not an ordinary chronicle play but it is an imaginative reconstruction of history in the modern context.

9.9 Questions

1. Bring out the importance of the opening scene of *Tughaq*.

2. What light does scene two of *Tughlaq* throw on the step mother and Najib.

3. What light does the conversation between the Sultan and the Sheikh in Scene Three of *Tughlaq* throw on their characters?

4. Describe how Sheikh Imam-ud-din was killed.

5. Describe the meeting of the rebel (Amirus and Sayyids) courtiers.

6. What light do the conversations of the Sultan first with the Guard and then with Barani throw on his problems?

7. Describe the circumstances leading to the death of Ghiyas-ud-din Abbasid.

8. Describe the circumstan.ces leading to the murder of the step mother of Tughlaq.

9. Describe the happening on the arrival of (Aziz in disguise of) Ghiyas-ud-din in Daulatabad.

9.10 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Chattopadhyaya   2.Aurobindo, Tagore

3. *Tughlaq*   4. 5   5. Daulatabad

9.11 For Further Reading

1. Dhanavel, P., *The Indian Imagination of Girish Karnad.* New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2000.

2. Ghosh, Nibir.K. "Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*: History in the Future Tense." *50 Years of Indian Writing.* New Delhi: IAES, 1999.

Unit 10

WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA

- R. K.Narayan

10.1 Introduction

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayanaswami (1906-2001) is best known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. *Waiting for the Mahatma* is a daring and successful attempt at introducing Gandhiji as a character in a novel and getting him to take an interest in a young couple, the girl Bharati his follower and the young man a pleasant but aimless individual. The story is about how the young man is transformed into a person with ideals, both because of his love for the girl and because of the Mahatma's influence. R.K.Narayan put the stress not merely on Gandhi's influence, but on Gandhi as a character and not as a symbol.

10.2 Unit Objectives

- R.K.Narayan as a painter of modern India
- R.K.Naryan and his social perspective
- His portrayal of Mahatma Gandhi

10.3 Unit Structure

10.1 Introduction
10.2 Unit Objectives
10.3 Unit Structure
10.4 Life and Works of R.K.Narayan
10.5 An Outline Story of *Waiting for the Mahatma*
10.6 Chapter Summaries
10.7 Charactersketches

10.7.1 Mahatma Gandhi

10.7.2 Sriram

10.7.3 Bharati

10.8 Sriram's first meeting with Bharati

10.9 Circumstances leading to Gandhiji's staying in a scavenger's hut

10.10 Circumstances leading to Sriram's leaving his grandmother for good

10.11Gandhi's tour of Malgudi

10.12 Gandhi's visit affecting the lovers, Sriram and Bharati

10.13 Sriram's participation in the movements launched by Gandhi

10.14 Jagadish's influence on Sriram and its dangerous consequence

10.15 Sriram in prison

10.16 Wit and humour

10.17 Summation

10.18 Questions

10.19 Answers to CYP Questions

10.20 For Further Reading

10.4 Life and Works of R.K.Narayan

The 'R' in the novelist's name stands for Rasipuram in Salem district, where he was born in 1906 and the 'K' stands for the name of his father Krisimaswami Iyer, a humble school teacher who migrated to Mysore with his other children, leaving behind Narayan to grow with his grandmother in Madras. Narayan was very unimpressive at school failing repetitively in the High School and Intermediate Examinations a bitter experience reflected later in the character of Balu in the *Financial Expert.* After graduating from Maharaja College in Mysore in 1930, Narayan had to support the family, which he did by working as a clerk in the Mysore Secretariat and later as a teacher in a village school. This phase of his life is reflected in the novel, *The English Teacher.* He was soon fed up with the teaching profession and started writing novels and short stories in English. Many of his novels won him worldwide recognition.

Narayan fell in love with a young girl by name Rajam and married her even though their horoscopes did not tally. He employed a money-minded astrologer who at the sight of rupees, readily green-signalled the marriage. However after five years of happy married life, Rajam died of typhoid in 1939, leaving Narayan distraught. This was the gloomiest period of his life. He did not write anything for nearly six years after which period he started writing novels at regular intervals. .

Narayan's novels are:

1. Swami and Friends
2. The Bachelor of Arts
3. The Dark Room
4. The English Teacher
5. Mr, Sampath
6. The Financial Expert
7. Waiting for the Mahatma
8. The Guide
9. The Sweet Vendor.

The above is a brief account of Narayan's major novels. In an interview given to the Delhi Doordharshan he said that his hest novel is yet to be written.

Check Your Progress Question

1. Sriram lives in ___.

2. Sriram's father was killed in the ___.

10.5 An Outline of the story of *Waiting for the Mahatma*

Sriram lives with his grandmother in Malgudi. His father was killed in the First World War. His mother had died delivering him. His grandmother brings him up with great love and solicitude. When he is twenty, his grandmother transfers to Sriram the accumulated amount of the military pension sent every

month by the government. It is a big amount more than thirty-eight thousand rupees.

Gandhiji Comes to Malgudi once and he stays in a hut among the sweepers. Sriram meets and falls in love with Bharathi, one of Gandhiji's disciples. He joins Gandhiji's camp. When Gandhiji leaves Malgudi, Sriram takes an active part in the Quit India Movement.

Bharati is arrested. Sriram hesitates to surrender to the police. He lives alone in a cave temple. He befriends one Jagadish, a terrorist. He is arrested at his grandmother's funeral.

Sriram is released when India becomes free. He goes to see Jagadish. Jagadish tells him that Bharathi is in Noakhali with Gandhiji. Bharathi invites Sriram to Delhi. Gandhi gives Bharathi permission to marry Sriram. Gandhi is assassinated on the evening before their scheduled marriage, takes place.

10.6 Chapter Summaries

Parts One and Two

Sriram has no parents. His mother died delivering him. His father got killed in the Mesopotamian battle. There is a framed picture of his mother on the wall. Sriram wished his mother looked like the Queen whose picture he sees daily in the nearby Petty shop owned by Kanni. Sriram is under his granny's custody. She is a sentimental woman crying profusely whenever she receives her son's pension. She claims that she has enough money for Sriram's upkeep and so deposits the pension unspent in the Fund office.

The boy Sriram often goes to Kanni's petty shop not merely to buy peppermints but mainly to gaze at the Queen's picture there. Kanni says that he forcibly got that picture from a Revenue Inspector who could not pay his dress. Kanni does not want to sell the picture to Sriram because he considers it a lucky one.

Check Your Progress Question

3. Name the owner of the petty shop.

Sriram spends his time sitting on the window sill and gazing at the outside world. He is not at all interested in playing with boys of his age. His grandfather tells him that he was born under the star sadhaya. Even at the age of twenty he is immature and does not want to invite his friends to his birthday celebrations.

Sriram's house, situated in Kabir street, is two hundred years old. Behind it is the market bustling night and day. Other important buildings in that areas are the Star Press, the Butter factory and fund office.

Sriram is 20 years old. One afternoon granny hands over the pass-book to Sriram and takes him to the Fund office. More than thirty thousand rupees is accumulated in the account. Granny authorizes Sriram to withdraw money from the account. She is immensely relieved. The bank manager advises Sriram not to withdraw more than two hundred and fifty rupees at a time. Sriram at once writes out a withdrawal slip for two hundred and fifty rupees. Both granny and the manager tell him that it is dangerous to keep a lot of cash with himself. At their suggestion, Sriram draws fifty rupees the next morning. He spends four annas buying coloured drinks and plantains for himself at Kanni's petty shop. He gives a ten-rupee note, but Kanni keeps the balance himself, saying that Sriram's grandfather bought Singapore cheroots for nine rupees and twelve annas and died without paying for it. Sriram does not grudge repaying his grandfather's debt. He wants to buy Queen Victoria's picture hanging in Kanni's shop. But Kanni regards it as a talisman and is not prepared to sell it at the moment.

Carrying cash in his jibba pocket, Sriram walks down the street with great elation. He is displeased with the Fund office Manager and also with his grandmother because they will still treat him as a little boy and do not allow him to withdraw as much money as he wants from the bank. He feels that he being an adult, his granny cannot question his ways. He walks round and round the Market Road in this rebellious mood when a man wearing a tucked in dhoti offers him a canvas folding chair for ten rupees. Sriram haggles with him and at last buys it for seven rupees and a half. He presents it to granny, hoping to pacify her. But she refuses to sit on it, saying the canvas is nothing but cowhide. Siram lounges the

whole day on the chair and in the evening goes to Anand Bhavan and eats his fill of delicacies and caps it all by seeing a Tamil film. He spends four years in this carefree manner.

On New Year's eve granny compels Sriram to go to market and buy some jaggery so that she can make some sweets for him. At the market a pretty girl comes to him jingling a money-box and asks him to make his contribution. He drops an eight-anna coin into the box without asking her any question about her parentage or background. Later, he learns from a jaggery merchant that the girl is a follower of Gandhi and is collecting money towards his proposed visit to Malgudi. It is obvious that Sriram falls in love with the girl at first sight.

There is a huge crowd on the hot sands of the Sarayu, waiting for the arrival of Gandhi. Sriram is also there. He finds people eating slices of cucumber to assuage their thirst. He also wants to buy a slice but could not go near the seller. Seated on the dais among others is Natesh, the Municipal Chairman whom everybody regards as an opportunist passing as a patriot in order to be close to Gandhiji. Mahatma arrives at last and the crowd immediately becomes silent. Gandhi asks them all to clap their hands, so that they will give up thoughts of their petty personal problems and concentrate on what he is going to say.

Gandhiji says generally that some are not clapping. Sriram thinks that Gandhi is referring to his inaction and starts clapping vigorously. A girl at the microphone leads the gathering to chant the hymn Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram. When the chanting is over, Gandhi begins his address. He apologizes for not being able to speak to them in Tamil. He refuses to speak in English as this foreign language has enslaved them. He says that if god allows him to live one hundred and twenty-five and not depend on the translator, our friend Natesh. This comment on Natesh as our friend makes a school master grumble that Natesh is a cunning man who runs with the hare and hunts with the hound. In the course of his address, Gandhi stresses the need for Ram Dhun ('chanting the name of Rama') spinning on the chakra and the practice of absolute Truth and Non-violence.

Check Your Progress Question

4. Sriram drops ___ into the box which is carried by Bharati.

At the next meeting the next evening, Sriram gets a seat close to the dais. Women are assembled in an enclosure by his side. He feels very guilty because his mind is full of thoughts of women. He recalls Gandhiji's advice on the previous day that men should look either clown at the earth or up at the stars in order to avoid lustful thoughts. Gandhiji speaks about non-violence in the second meeting also. He says that an enemy will become friendly if one cultivates an extra affection for him. He humbly acknowledges his indebtedness to Jesus Christ who preached the philosophy of 'turning the other cheek'.

Sriram does not quite grasp what Gandhi says. For the first time he becomes aware of his limitations and of the need to try and follow something which he has never done before. He relates everything that Gandhi says to something that he has done or failed to do. When Gandhiji speaks about the evils of untouchability. Sriram calls him and his grandmother's ill-treatment of a scavenger. Again, when Gandhi emphasize the need to purge one's mind of bitterness and develop total love, Sriram thinks that he has nothing but love for Bharati whom he finds on the dais very close to Gandhi. She is dressed in a khaddar sari and appears all the more charming in his eyes. Gone is his contempt for khaddar clothes.

As soon as the meeting is over, people rush to Gandhiji in order to have a look at him from close quarters. Bharati follows Gandhiji and the volunteers have a tough time pushing back the people and trying to make a way for Gandhiji to move on. Sriram follows Gandhiji but is suddenly stopped by a former teacher who mistakes him for a genuine Gandhian and advises him to make sacrifices and work hard for the liberation of India. Sriram disentangles himself from the teacher's grip and is pleased to see Gandhi talking affably with Bharati in front of a hut.

At this juncture, the author stops the narration and tells us about the miserable lot of the scavengers of Malgudi living in dirty hovels on the bank of the Sarayu. The scavengers are paid only ten rupees a month. They spend their

earning on drinking. When cows or bulls die, they eat their flesh and selling their hide buy themselves liquor and make merry.

In a flash-back, the author narrates the circumstances which have led to Gandhi's choosing to stay in a scavenger's hut. The Municipal Chairman, Mr.Natesh, a shameless time server, scents that people are in favour of Gandhiji. So he pretends to be a Gandhian by hanging khaddar screens all over his palatial bungalow. He offers his house for Gandhi's stay during his Malgudi tour. This is brought to Gandhi's notice but word is received from the head quarters of the party that a decision would be taken in this matter by Gandhi himself when he comes to Malgudi.

After the reception is over, Gandhi is taken in the chairman's car to his splendid bungalow. The Chairman had made many alterations to create an impression that he is a sincere patriot. All the patriots of British rulers (such as that of George V's wedding) were replaced by those of Indian leaders. Khaddar hangings adorned doors and windows. He had asked his wife and son also to wear khaddar dress. Gandhi sits on a varandah covered with khaddar printed cloth. The Chairman asks Gandhi if he would like to have a glass of orange juice prepared from the oranges grown in his own estates in the Mempi hill. Gandhi gives his assent. The Chairman atonce brings a large tray filled with golden oranges. Gandhi freely distributes them to the poor children standing and watching him from a distance. Gandhi calls a dark, dirty, ill-clad boy and seating him by his side, advises him not to spit out the orange seeds. He expresses a wish to visit the boy's hut. Brushing aside the Chairman's feeble protest, Gandhi goes to the Scavenger's Colony with the little boy and occupies an unused hut. All the filth is removed and bright lights are put up there overnight by the municipal employees. Gandhi quips that the huts of the cleansers of the city have been cleansed atlast.

Check Your Progress Question

5. Name the Municipal Chairman.

Along with others Sriram enters Gandhi's hut. He finds Gandhi doing a number of things simultaneously, dictating notes, writing letters, eating his sparse meal of nuts and milk and finally going to sleep.

After Gandhi goes to sleep, Bharati and Sriram meet at the edge of the river. Bharati teases Sriram to her heart's contents. She says that she was christened Bharati meaning daughter of India by Gandhi after her parent's death. She was brought up by the local Seva Sangh. At present, she is a member of the Gandhi Camp, attending to his needs and carrying out his dictates. Sriram tells her boldly that he likes her and wants to be with her. He admits that she is superior to him in all respects. Bharati offers to take Sriram to Gandhi so that he can himself discuss with Gandhi his decision to join his Camp. She asks, Sriram to speak the truth only. While talking with Gandhi, Sriram is scared of entering Gandhi's presence Bharati asks Sriram to meet her at 3 a.m. in Gandhi's Camp and runs back to her hut.

Sriram goes back home. The irate grandmother does not even talk to him. She is deeply upset when Sriram hints to her that he is going to join the Gandhi Camp. He leaves home before day-break on the following morning. According to her Gandhi is a dangerous person, bringing untouchables into temples and setting people against the police.

Sriram attaches himself to Gandhiji. He and Bharati follow Gandhi in his rapid tour of the drought stricken villages around Malgudi. As usual, Gandhiji asks people to pray to God and spin on the charkas. Before boarding the train and leaving Malgudi, Gandhiji entrusts Sriram to Bharati. He asks Sriram to regard her as his Guru and treat her with respect and reverence. After Gandhi leaves Malgudi, Sriram lives in a deserted cave on the slope of the Mempi Hill. The struggle for independence becomes intense, Gandhi asks all his followers to spread the message that the Britishers must quit India voluntarily. Bharati brings Gandhi's instructions to Sriram. At once, he plunges into action. He visits village and writes on all walls Quit India. But the villagers are not aroused.

Sriram becomes dispirited. He writes the message on the walls of the bungalow of an Englishman by name Mathieson who says that he regards India as his mother country as he has spent several decades here. He says that he is Indianized and that no Indian has the right to ask him to quit. Sriram is baffled.

He does not know how to answer this question. Next, Sriram pickets a shop where English biscuits are sold. He prevents people from buying anything at the shop. The frightened shop-keeper closes the shop and sneaks away. This is a minor victory for Sriram. But he is not elated. Gandhi sends him a letter through Bharati, advising him to cultivate inner faith and not to grow despondent.

Gandhi s next move is to ask all his followers to surrender to the police and court imprisonment. He instructs Sriram and Bharati also to do so. Bharati acts positively and at once she surrenders to the police and goes to prison. But there is still a trace of cowardice in Sriram. This is nothing but a lame excuse. Gandhi is in prison. All prisons overflow with his followers. This episode once again proves Gandhi's immense hold on his followers.

Part Three

Part Three of the novel shows Sriram drifting away frcm Gandhi and being captivated by Subhas Chandra Bose's cult of violence.

One day Jagadish, an ardent follower of Subhas and owner of a photo studio in Malgudi meets Sriram in his cave residence and gives him a radio set which can both transmit and receive secret messages. It can be used to receive Subhas's messages. Sriram is fed up with Gandhi's brand of Non-violence and felt that independence could be secured very quickly through violent means. He hides the radio set behind the broken statue in his cave.

One day, using the radio set, Sriram receives and address of Subhas, appealing to the Indian soldiers in the British army to desert their side and join his National Army which may march into India at any moment and drive out the Britishers. And then Subhas goes on to make some important announcements which could not be heard because of some defect in the radio set. But the resourceful Jagadish completes the message by using his imagination. He cyclostyles the text of Subhas's address and instructs Sriram to distribute the copies widely. Sriram carries derailing trains and setting fire to government

offices. The police announce a reward to whoever gives information about Sriram.

Disguising himself as a rice merchant, Sriram goes to the slaughter house where Bharati is locked up. He is very happy to meet her. She informs him that his grandmother is dying and asks him to attend on her at once. Sriram goes there, only to find her dead. He cannot join the funeral procession openly. Yet he goes to the cremation ground where a pleasant surprise is sprung on all. A toe of the grandmother is found twitching when the body is about to be set fire to. In a few minutes the grandmother rouses from her unconscious state and sits upright! The priest, however, asserts that a person once brought to be cremated should not be taken back home. So Sriram stays with her in a ruined building nearby.

To cap all their hilarious development, the police come there and whisk away Sriram. Kanni takes the old woman back home, brushing aside the priest's objections.

This part of the novel is a mixture of seriousness and farce. The 'resurrection' of the grandmother is the very height of comedy.

Part Four

For his violent activities, Sriram is arrested and put in jail. He finds it painful to get accustomed to the ill-treatment meted out to prisoners. What is most sickening to Sriram is that privacy is not available for the prisoners even when they have to answer the calls of nature. There is only one public toilet in the prison and all the prisoners have to use it at the same time. This barbarous rule revolts the sensitive Sriram. When the I.G. visits the jail, Sririam steps forward to protest against this. But he is held back. After the I.G. leaves, the superintendent of the jail speaks to Sriram very harshly. He says that Sriram is not a political prisoner and so cannot expect any privilege. He threatens with the prospect of life imprisonment. Sriram is terrified. He becomes submissive.

Sriram meets several interesting characters in the prison. A forger is one among them. He is kind to Sriram and offers to share his vadai and chicken 'Pulav' with him. Being Brahmin Sriram refuses it. A bully is another memorable character in the jail. He committed a terrible murder but was given a minor punishment only by the magistrate. The bully is repentant. He sings 'Rama Rama' in prison and compels others to join him. Sriram wants to escape from prison and marry Bharati. But the bully warns him against this fool hardy step. He says that even if he escapes he will be caught and brought back to jail and subjected to far worse treatment. Sriram is convinced. He gives up the idea of breaking out of the jail.

When India gains freedom, all the political prisoners are freed. Being a militant Sriram is not released alongwith the first batch. However, after some delay, he is also released. But the forger and the bully continue in prison. This makes them feel very bitter. Sriram distributed his earnings among his fellow-prisoners and walks out, sadder and wiser.

The prison episode gives R.K. Narayan an opportunity to highlight the hideous hardships of prisoners.

Part Five

After release from prison, Sriram goes straight back to Malgudi and is shocked to find his house occupied by somebody else. That means that his grandmother is no more. Jagadish directs him to Noakhali where Bharati is with Gandhi, trying to restore Hindu, Muslim Unity. Sriram goes to Delhi, where he is received by Bharati and taken to a refugee camp where the children orphaned by the recent religious riots are taken excellent care of by Bharati. The lovers meet Gandhi and ask for his permission to marry. Gandhi says that they can get married on the following morning and adds jocularly that he will act as their priest. However, while leaving for prayer, he tells Bharati that he has a feeling that he might not be able to attend their marriage as he promised earlier.

At the prayer hall, Gandhi appears on the dais. A man already standing there salutes Gandhi with folded hands. When Gandhi returns his salute, the stranger takes out his revolver and shoots Gandhi dead.

R.K. Narayan does not say whether or not the Sriram-Bharati marriage took place. Even if it had taken place, it would have been married by bitter memorise of Gandhi's tragic death.

10.7 Charactersketches

10.7.1. Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi is presented flesh and blood in this novel. The live Gandhi gets mixed up with the fictitious lovers Sriram and Bharati. The novel has a macabre ending with Gandhi's tragic death occurring a day before the scheduled date of the lover's wedding.

The fundamental tenets of Gandhi's philosophy stand revealed in the two public speeches that he makes in Malgudi. He lays stress on spinning the chakra daily and practising absolute truth and non-violence. He emphasizes the point that if Indians love Britishers and return good for their evil, they will by ashamed of themselves and leave India. To make the listeners focus all their attention on himself, he makes them clap their hands rhythmically.

Gandhi is presented as a champion of the downtrodden. He identifies himself with the scavengers of Malgudi and stays in one of their dirty huts to the great disappointment of the municipal chairman, Natesh, who had agreed earlier to accommodate Gandhi in his luxurious bungalow. The effect of Gandhi's stay in the offal-ridden slum is miraculous. All the filth is removed and bright lights are fitted up overnight. The whole place, with children joyfully frisking and gambling has a paradisal look. Gandhi always rushes to trouble-torn places and offers consolation to the suffering people. He visits the drought-hit villages near Malgudi, sufferers flock to him and listen spell-bound eventhough he does not give them food but merely asks them to pray. His mere presence gives them the

will-power to bear with their sufferings stoically. He tours the strife-torn Noakhali and tries to restore Hindu-Muslim unity. He arranges a refugee camp where the children orphaned by the religious riots are taken excellent care of by Bharati.

Gandhi is not presented as a puritan. He refuses the choice oranges offered by Natesh but distributes them to the poor harijan children gazing at him. He is not averse to love. He blesses the lovers Sriram and Bharati but merely asks them to wait till some of the most urgent problems facing the nation are attended to.

It is a pity that fanatics do not pay heed to his golden gospel and cause his death.

10.7.2 Sriram

In the first part of the novel, Sriram is presented more or less as mentally retarded. When children of his age group go out and play boisterously, Sriram spends the time sitting on the window sill and watching them play. Even at the age of twenty, he cannot read the almanac. When he is authorized by his grandmother to operate his account in the Fund office his actions are immature. He wants to withdraw two hundred and fifty rupees without any idea of why he needs so much money. This is nothing but an act of childish puerility and imbecility. After drawing the money from the bank, he easily gets cheated by the shop-keeper Kanni who collects a sizeable amount of money from him, saying that he supplied imported cheroots to his grandfather on credit. Later, he is cheated by a man who foists a worthless arm-chair on Sriram at a very high Price.

Even while talking with Gandhi, Sriram betrays this childishness. He tells Gandhi candidly that he wants to join his camp because he wants to be with Bharati. He is not aware of the amusement he is causing, though Bharati is standing behind Gandhi and gesturing to him not to make such ridiculous remarks. Gandhi takes it all good-humouredly, merely congratulating Bharati on having such an ardent friend.

Sriram is more acted upon than acting, in the beginning he is acted upon by his grandmother. After gaining control over the bank account he feels immensely happy, thinking that his grandmother's grip on him to get his grandmother's permission to join his (Gandhi's) camp. Sriram is not courageous enough to argue out the matter with grandmother. He speaks away at the dead of night leaving behind a note about his whereabouts.

After joining the Gandhi camp, Sriram is dominated by Bharati. She advises him how he should carry out Gandhi's dictates. Gandhi understands Sriram's dependence on Bharati and so before leaving Malgudi he entrusts Sriram to Bharati's care and guidance, calling her his 'Guru' whom he should treat with 'respect and 'reverence'.

After Gandhi leaves him, Sriram falls under the baneful influence of the militant Jagadish and goes about derailing train and setting fire to government offices, throwing the Gandhian philosophy to the winds. After release from prison, he once again comes under the influence of Gandhi whose permission he seeks to marry Bharati. It is a pity that it is not known definitely at the end of the novel whether or not he marries Bharati after Gandhi's tragic death.

10.7.3 Bharati

Like Shakespeare's Rosalind, R.K.Narayan's Bharati is pert and mischievous. First, she appears in the market place with a money-box in hand, gently forcing people to contribute their mite to the Gandhi fund. She collects an eight-anna silver coin from Sriram who is bowled out by her charms.

She makes fun of Sriram when the latter fumbles and falters, trying to express his love for her. She has the courage to call him to the riverside and talk to him in the dark when there is nobody on the spot. The surprising thing is that though she is seated close to him, she talks so hilariously that Sriram has no thoughts of taking advantage of her loneliness and trying to embrace her. Such is her sanctifying and ennobling influence.

Bharati is presented as Gandhi's closest associate; on the dais in the public meetings held in Malgudi, Bharati stands beside Gandhi. She follows him when the procession goes to the scavenger's slum. She accompanies him in all his tours. When he tours the drought-hit villages near Malgudi or the strife-torn Noakhali, Bharati is with him as if she is his shadow. Gandhi trusts her so much that he imposes many onerous responsibilities on her. He asks her to act as Sriram's guru, guilding and controlling him along proper lines. In Noakhali, Gandhi leaves her in charge of a refugee camp where children orphaned by the recent Hindu-Muslim clashes are housed.

Bharati is so very loyal and affectionate towards Gandhi because he took care of her and acted as her godfather ever since she became an orphan. She gets Gandhi's permission to marry Sriram but unfortunately Gandhi dies a day before the scheduled date of her wedding.

10.7.4Jagadish

Jagadish is wedded to violence just as Sriram is to non-violence. Sriram joins the Gandhi camp primarily because his beloved Bharati also belongs to it. His reverence for Gandhi develops only in course of time. But Jagadish does not require any such intermediary. He attaches himself to Subhas Chandra Bose because he believes firmly that India can achieve freedom only under the leadership of the aggressive fighter, Subhas.

Though a photographer by profession, Jagadish is least interested in his career. He goes about spreading Subhas's militaristic philosophy. Ife gives a powerful radio set to Sriram and instructs him how to receive secret messages from Subhas. An insect creeps into the radio set and spoils its functioning. As a result, Sriram cannot receive the complete message. All that he hears is that Subhas wants the Indian soldiers in the British army to leave their post and join the National Army. But Jagadish is resourceful enough to complete the broken message. He tells Sriram that Subhas is going to march onto Delhi and topple the British government on an appointed day.

Jagadish easily brainwashes people. At his behest, Sriram goes about railing trains and setting fire to government offices without any qualms. These destructive deeds land Sriram in jail. After India gains freedom, Sriram is released and comes straight back to Malgudi. He meets an embittered Jagadish there. Jagadish complains that his fighting for the cause of freedom has not been recognized and that the congress party has refused him a ticket to contest in the general elections. It is thus clear that this fighter for freedom has been regarded to the level of running after the loaves and fishes of office.

10.8 Sriram's first meeting with Bharati

Sriram is an immature young man. He is authorized by his grandmother to withdraw money from the bank. This makes him think highly of himself. He takes it into his head that nobody has the right to control him. Twirling, the currency notes in his pocket, he wanders about the market. A pretty girt comes him jingling a money-box. She peremptorily asks him to make his contribution. She does not even explain to him why she is collecting money. Ravished by her beauty, Sriram drops an eight-anna silver coin into the box. It is revealed later at the girl's name is Bharati. Only after Bharati gets lost in the crowd does Sriram realize, that he has fallen in love with her at first sight. He regrets not having given her more money and attracted her notice. He goes to a jaggery merchant to buy some jaggery for granny and comes to know from him that Bharati is a follower of Gandhi and is collecting money to be presented to him.

The episode shows how susceptible Sriram is. His love develops against the background of Gandhi's political campaign in Malgudi. The personal and the political elements are thus intermingled.

10.9 Circumstances leading to Gandhiji's staying in a scavenger's hut

It is hotly debated where Gandhiji is to be put up during his Malgudi tour. The Municipal Chairman, Mr. Natesh, a calculating opportunist, understands that

he stands to gain by posing as a patriot and associating himself with the emerging, national leader, Gandhiji. So he offers his Palatial bungalow 'Neel Bagh' to Gandhiji, himself staying in the Circuit House temporarily.

An acrimonious discussion centres round this issue. A 'dissenting voice' mutters whether the Circuit House is meant for Britishers only. It is claimed that Gandhiji has as much right to stay there as any Britisher. The collector and the superintendent of police silences the dissenting voice by saying, that the Circuit House could not be 'rigged up' stay at short notice. He says that the Circuit House is unsafe for Gandhi to stay in. It is finally resolved to place the matter before Gandhiji himself. Word is received from the headquarters of the Party that Gandhiji will take a decision regarding this matter when he comes to Malgudi.

Soon after the reception is diver, Gandhi is taken in a procession along the streets of Malgudi in Natesh's motorcar. The thick crowds standing on either side of the road lustily cheer him. The riffraff gatecrash when Gandhiji is taken Natesh's bungalow and seated on a divan on the verandah. Natesh asks Gandhiji if he would like to have a glass of orange juice prepared from the oranges growing in his orchards in Mempi. Gandhiji says humbly that he is not in the habit of eating anything in odd hours. He, however, accepts Natesh's oranges and freely distributes them to the dirty urchins standing in front of him and watching him with curiosity. He is particularly affectionate towards a small boy and expresses a wish to visit his house, though it is made up of bamboo sticks and pieces of sack only. The Chairman's objectives are brushed aside. In no time does the car carrying Gandhiji and his pet Harijan boy reach the bank of the Sarayu where the scavengers live. Gandhiji selects a vacant hovel for his stay.

Gandhiji's visit has an electrifying effect. The Municipal authorities work round the clock to tidy up the slum and make it inhabitable. Bright lights are put up. Drunkards stop beating their wives. A festive atmosphere descends on the place.

10.10 Circumstances leading to Sriram's leaving his grandmother for good

Sriram goes to Gandhiji's hut one early morning at the behest of Bharati. Gandhiji takes Sriram and Bharati. Gandhiji advises him to eschew all thoughts of violence and cultivate absolute love even towards Britishers. Sriram wants to join the Gandhi camp not because he is drawn towards the Gandhian philosophy of ahimsa but because he can have access to his beloved Bharati and enjoy uninterrupted company in Gandhi's hut. But Gandhiji says finally that he will take Sriram into his fold only if he gets his Grandmother's permission. Sriram is sure that his grandmother will never permit him to join the Gandhi camp. At first, he trys with the idea of lying to Gandhi that he is unnerved that Gandhiji, being a Mahatma, can easily detect his lie.

Sriram musters courage and goes back home. Grandmother looks much relaxed. She kindly gives him a plateful of rice prepared with pure ghee. Sriram enjoys eating it but says that the discipline strictly enforced in the Gandhi camp does not allow anyone to eat any food after seven p.m. Grandmother, says that she does not left anything at night — a custom that she has been practising for several decades. She says self-pityingly that nobody has taken notice of her sacrifice whereas Gandhi's fasting is made much of. Grandmother mocks at Sriram's adoration of Gandhiji. She says that Gandhi is unjustifiably being deified. Sriram reports fiercely that Gandhiji is his God and that he will not allow anyone speak ill of the great soul. He cannot at all tolerate grandmother's disrespect towards the Mahatma. He subsides only when grandmother admits that, not reading newspapers, she does not know anything about the greatness of Gandhiji.

Sriram understands that his grandmother rooted in the old order, cannot be expected to adjust herself with new trends. Though he is not hungry, he quietly eats the dinner cooked by grandmother. Since she cannot be brought round, he decides to leave home without asking her permission. At dead of night, when granny is fast asleep, the scribbles a note informing her of his decision to join the Gandhi camp and leaving it near her spectacles sneaks away noiselessly.

Sriram's dependence on his grandmother ends and his dependence on Bharati begins now.

10.11Gandhi's tour of Malgudi

Gandhi's tour of Malgudi lasts only a few days but brings about remarkable changes. He addresses two public meetings on the bank of the Sarayu, laying all emphasis on practising ahimsa and speaking the truth, at all costs. He humbly acknowledges his indebtedness to Jesus Christ in these matters. He cuts across the barriers erected by rigid Government officers such as the District collector and time-servers such as the municipal chairman Natesh and reaches out to the poor scavengers living in dirty hovels on the banks of the Sarayu. His rejecting the luxurious bungalow of Natesh and choosing to stay with the scavengers has an electrifying effect on the slum.

The whole area is spruced up and made inhabitable overnight. Hillock of offal and filth vanish into thin air. The place which hitherto remained dark and dismal at night is fitted with bright lights round which children play noisily. Even incorrigible drunkards are unconsciously influenced by Gandhi. They give up drinking and beating their wives. Thus a festive atmosphere descends on the slum.

10.12 Gandhi's visit affecting the lovers, Sriram and Bharati

In the beginning, Sriram is not quite receptive to Gandhi's call. He steps into Gandhi's hut not because of his flame but Bharati is there. He is stunned to see Gandhi engaging himself in multifarious activities simultaneously - spinning the chakra, dictating letters, talking to visitors and finally going to sleep. When Bharati tells him later that the safest place for them to meet is inside Gandhi's hut, Sriram is alarmed. He does not have the courage to face Gandhi again. He knows that he cannot speak the absolute truth always, as Gandhi expects one to do. However, encouraged by Bharati, he re-enters Gandhi's hut very early one morning and blurts out idiotically that he likes Bharati and would like to join Gandhi's camp and do whatever she does.

Gandhi is amused and not angered by Sriram's unwitting statement. But he insists that Sriram get his grandmother's permission to join his camp. Grandmother does not like Gandhi viewing him as a dangerous iconoclast bent on admitting untouchables into temples and setting people against the police. So Sriram sneaks away from home at dead of night leaving a note for grandmother that he has decided to join the Gandhi camp.

What attracted Sriram primarily was Bharati rather than Gandhi. But slowly the Gandhian magic starts working. Going with Gandhi on a tour of the drought-hit villages, Sriram rapidly matures. He gives up his cinematic idea of the village as a paradise. For the first time, he becomes aware of the stark poverty of Indian villagers. He is struck by Gandhi's rapport with the suffering people, consoling them and asking them to pray even in dire poverty. After the tour is over, Gandhi takes leave from a small station at Koppal. Before boarding the train, he entrusts Sriram to Bharati's custody. He understands that Sriram is dependent on her and so tells him. "Bharati is your Guru... think of her with reverence and respect."

A noble role is thus assigned by Gandhi to Bharati. Sriram's eyes fill with tears as he cannot bear separation from the Mahatma. The 'Seven Down' moves away, taking Gandhi to Trichy, and then to Madras, Bombay, Delhi and out into the universe. Night falls not only literally but also figuratively.

10.13 Sriram's participation in the movements launched by Gandhi

From time to time Gandhi launches certain nation-wide movements to awaken the dormant masses and also to keep his followers into the pray himself first and foremost.

After Gandhi leaves Malgudi, Sriram lives in a deserted cave on the slope of the Mempi Hill. The struggle for independence becomes intense. Gandhi asks all his followers to spread the message that the Britishers must quit India voluntarily. Bharati brings Gandhi's instructions to Sriram. At once he plunges

into action. He visits villages and writes on all walls 'Quit India'. But the villagers are not aroused. Sriram becomes dispirited. He writes the message on the walls of the bungalow of an Englishman by name Mathieson who says that he regards India as his mother country as he has spent several decades here. He says that he is Indianized and that no Indian has the right to ask him to quit. Sriram is baffled. He does not know how to answer this question. Next, Sriram pickets a shop where English biscuits are sold. He prevents people from buying anything at the shop. The frightened shop-keeper closes the shop and sneaks away. This is a minor victory for Sriram but he is not elated. Gandhi sends him a letter through Bharati, advising him to cultivate inner faith and not to grow dependent.

Gandhi's next move is to ask all his followers to surrender to the police and court imprisonment. He instructs Sriram and Bharati also to do so. Bharati acts positively at once. She surrenders to the police and goes to prison. But there is still a trace of cowardice in Sriram. He backs out on the ground that he would like to meet his grandmother before going to prison. This is nothing but a lame excuse. Gandhi is in prison. All prisons overflow with his followers. This episode once again proves Gandhi's immense hold on his followers.

10.14 Jagadish's influence on Sriram and its dangerous consequence

The philosophies of Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose are diametrically opposed to each other, the former wedded to non-violence and the latter to violence to achieve their ends. R.K. Narayan presents two young men as disciples of the two leaders. Sriram begins as an admirer of Gandhi but is easily swayed by Jagadish. Part Three of the novel shows Sriram drifting away from Gandhi and being captivated by Subhas Chandra Bose's philosophy of violence.

One day Jagadish, an ardent follower of Subhas and owner of a photo studio in Malgudi meets Sriram in his cave residence and gives him a radio set which can both transmit and receive secret messages. It can be used to receive Subhas's messages. Sriram is fed up with Gandhi's brand of non-violence. He is

thrilled to Subhas's belief that freedom could be secured very quickly through violent means. He hides the radio set behind the broken statue in his cave.

One day, using the radio set, Sriram receives an address of Subhas appealing to the Indian soldiers in the British Army to desert their side and join his National Army which may march onto India at any moment and drive out the Britishers. And then Subhas goes on to make some important announcements which could not be heard because of some defect in the radio set. But the resourceful Jagadish completes the image by using his imagination. He cyclostyles the text of Subhas's address and instructs Sriram to distribute the copies widely. Sriram carries out this work spiritedly. Sriram goes about wantonly derailing trains and setting fire to Government offices. The police announce a reward to whoever gives information about Sriram.

Disguising himself as a rice-merchant, Sriram goes to the slaughter-house where Bharati is locked up. He is very happy to meet her. She informs him that his grandmother is dying and asks him to attend on her at once. Sriram goes there, only to find her dead. He cannot join the funeral procession openly. Yet he goes to the cremation ground where a pleasant surprise is sprung on all. A toe of the grandmother is found twitching when the body is about to be set fire to. In a few minutes the grandmother rises from her unconscious state and sits upright! The priest however, asserts that a person once brought to cremation should not be taken back home. So Sriram stays with her in a ruined building nearby. To cap all this hilarious development, the police come there and whisk Away Sriram. Kanni takes the old woman back home, brushing aside the priest's objections.

This part of the novel is a mixture of seriousness and farce. The resurrection of the grandmother is the very height of comedy.

After India becomes free, all political prisoners including Sriram, are released. Sriram goes back to Malgudi and finds Jagadish there in a very bitter mood. Jagadish complains that nobody has recognized his contribution to the freedom struggle. The congress has refused him a ticket to contest in the general

elections. He directs Sriram to Noakhali where Bharati is helping Gandhi to establish Hindu-Muslim Unity. At last, Jagadish does a good turn to Sriram.

10.15 Sriram in prison

For his violent activities, Sriram is arrested and put in jail. He finds it paintul to get accustomed to the ill-treatment meted out to the prisoners. What is most sickening to Sriram is that privacy is not available for the prisoners — even when they have to answer the calls of nature. There is only one public toilet in the prison and all the prisoners have to use it at the same time. This barbarous rule revolts the sensitive Srirams. When the I.G. visits the jail, Sriram steps forward to protest against this. But he is held back. After the I.G. leaves, the superintendent of the jail speaks to Sriram very harshly. He says that Sriram is not a political prisoner and so cannot expect any privileges. He threatens that Sriram's imprisonment has not been fixed up. He is faced with the prospect of life imprisonment. Sriram is terrified. He becomes submissive.

Sriram meets several interesting characters in the prison. A forger is one among them. He is kind to Sriram and offers to share his 'vadai' and chicken 'pulav' with him. Being a Brahmin, Sriram refuses it. A bully is another memorable character in the jail. He committed a terrible murder but was Oven a minor punishment only by the magistrate. The bully is repentant. He sings 'Rama Rama' in prison and compels others to join him. Sriram wants to escape from prison and marry Bharati. But the bully warns him against this fool hardly step. He says that even if he escapes he will be caught and brought back to jail and subjected to far worse treatment. Sriram is convinced. He gives up the idea of breaking out the jail.

When India gains freedom, all the political prisoners are freed. Sriram being a militant, he is not released alongwith the first batch. However, after some delay, he is also released. But the forger and the bully continue in prison. This makes them feel very bitter. Sriram distributes his earnings among his fellow-prisoners and walks about sadder and wiser.

10.16 Wit and Humour

Waiting for the Mahatma is a serious novel about India's struggle for freedom and the riots that were sparked off in Noakhali soon after India won freedom. Intermixed with this is the humorous account that R.K. Narayan gives of Sriram's maturation.

In the first-section of the novel Sriram is presented as mentally retarded. Even though he is twenty, he cannot even read the almanac. He does not know how to withdraw money from the Fund office. He is easily cheated by Kanni who graps from him a sizeable amount of money towards repayment of his grandfather's loan. An uneducated man fosits on Sriram a worthless canvas chain at a high price. Sriram's falling in love with Bharati is sprinkled with humorous touches. He becomes enamoured of Bharati without even knowing her name. Later, he hurts Gandhi that he wants to join his (Gandhi) camp because Bharati also belongs to it.

Bharati stands behind Gandhi and cautions him not to talk in this in fatuous manner. Sriram's role as a freedom fighter is foolish at times. Gonpad talks of the way his father was shot dead by the British police for clinging to the party flag. Sriram brags that his father also died in the Mesopotamian battle. He does not understand that his father fought for and not against the Britishers and that there is nothing glorious about his death. All these episodes are touched with humour.

There is grim humour in Gandhiji jokingly expressing his readiness to serve as a priest and solemnize the Sriram-Bharati marriage, because the marriage does not take place as scheduled on account of Gandhi's assassination on the next day.

10.17 Summation

The hero Sriram is a poor middle class family young man suddenly come to wealth, regretting his ingratitude to his self-sacrificing Granny, a conservative

religious lady. Though the progress of events is viewed through the consciousness of Sriram, the apathy of the Malgudians to doctrines of non-violence and satyagraha is also made clear in no uncertain terms. R.K.Narayan has done remarkably well with a sense of humour that pervaded even the most tragic situations in life.

10.18 Questions

1. How does Gandhi's visit affect the lovers Sriram and Bharati?

2. Comment on the role of Mahatma Gandhi.

10.19 Answers to CYP Questions

1. Malgudi 2. First World War 3. Kanni 4. eight anna 5. Mr. Natesh

10.20 For Further Reading

1. Pandeya, Shiv M. *Studies in Modern Fiction.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing house Pvt. Ltd., 1983.

2. Walsh, William. *R.K.Narayan: A Critical Appreciation.* New Delhi: Allied Publishers Ltd., 1995.

3. Khatri, Chhote Lal. *R.K.Narayan: Reflections and Re-evaluation.* New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2006.

Question Paper Pattern

Indian Writing in English

Time: 3 Hrs | Max. 100 Marks

Section – A

Detailed Text

I. Annotate any FIVE of the following, choosing atleast Two from each group: 20

Group – A

Five Passages to be given from Detailed Poetry alone.

Group – B

Five Passages to be given from Detailed Prose and Drama

II. Two essays to be answered out of Five questions from Detailed Poetry, Prose and Drama

2 x 20 = 40

Section – B

Non-Detailed Text

III. Two essays to be answered out of Five Questions from Non-detailed Poetry, Drama and Fiction 2 x 20 = 40

PAPER VI – INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

(For those who joined in July 2003 and after

Time: Three hours Maximum: 100 marks

SECTION – A (5 x 4 = 20 marks)

Annotate FIVE of the following passages choosing at least TWO from each group:

GROUP A

1. The patriots have survived their
Long fasts; the children of the poor
Have not been so lucky….

2. He goes into the toilet to contemplate
Man's estrangement from a man-made world.

3. They sit like animals.

4. Cautiously masts sniff at the wind
wipe offs the odour
of land with clean sails.

5. But I'm afraid of you, my dear
there was a reason: I forget.

GROUP B

6. 'Not a bit of it' was the reply. 'Why should
you get so cheap what I had to learn?'

7. What little did get we enjoyed
to the utmost, from skin to core nothing
was thrown away?

8. Thieves have scarcely suffered too
much, and from so many.

9. It was not he it was the liquor;
he insisted

10. ....he wanted us to love truth with
whole hearts; he knew that mere
acquaintance without love is empty.

SECTION – B (2 x 20 = 40 marks)

Answer any TWO of the following questions in about 500 words each.

11. What, according to Tagore, is the greatness of children?

12. What prayer does Tagore make to God after completing his part at the world's festival?

13. Attempt a critical appreciation of the poem 'Enterprise'.

14. Write an essay on the theme of the poem 'Obituary'.

15. How does Gieve Patel describe the lot of servants?

SECTION – C (2 x 20 = 40 marks)

Answer any TWO of the following questions in about 500 words each.

16. What light does scene two of Tughlaq throw on the step mother and Najib.

17. Bring out the uniqueness of the expository scene of Tughlaq.

18. Describe how Sheikh – Imam – ud – din was killed.

19. Give a pen picture of Sriram's first meeting with Bharathi.

20. Write about R.K.Narayan's wit and humour as revealed in *Waiting for the Mahatma.*